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Near East & South Asia

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Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat To Meet With Peres in Gaza 9 Mar

JN0603091495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat will meet with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres in Gaza on Thursday [9 March]. Reuter cited Ahmad Quray', alias Abu-'Ala', minister of economy in the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], as saying that the meeting will deal with familiar issues, such as expanding the PNA and the redeployment of the Israeli Army.

'Arafat Says Capable of Mediating Israel-Iraq Accord

TA0503094195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Yasir 'Arafat says that Iraq no longer has anything against Israel and that he can improve relations between the two countries to the extent of a political settlement between them. He told Minister Moshe Shahal during their meeting in Gaza last week that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn had sent him a congratulatory message on the occasion of Ramadan in which Saddam recognized the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians for the first time.

Executive Committee To Meet, Discuss Future of Talks

JN0303161995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Feb 95 p 3

[Report by Rashid Khashshanah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis—A senior Palestinian source in Tunis yesterday ruled out holding an extraordinary session next month for the PLO Central Council, which is an intermediate body between the PLO Executive Committee and the Palestine National Council.

The source said that the PLO Executive Committee will meet in Tunis late this week for the first time since the Palestinian leadership moved to Gaza last summer. This meeting will be attended by the Executive Committee members who did not attend its recent meeting in Cairo.

He explained that the option of calling on the PLO Central Council to convene is linked to "the results of the coming meeting between [Egyptian] President Husni Mubarak and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres and also to the extent of flexibility shown in the Israeli position and their abandoning the current intransigence in the negotiations with the Palestinian Authority [PA]."

The source added that if the Central Council is invited to convene, such a meeting will only be held following the regional tour that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher intends to make.

Palestinian leaders in Tunis have told AL-HAYAH that President 'Arafat is brandishing the idea of inviting the Central Council for a meeting "as a means to pressure and convince the Israelis that he has other options and that their procrastination could prompt the Central Council to decide to suspend the negotiations."

These leaders explained that President 'Arafat is eager to play on this card "without actually using it because he is aware that the Central Council—which hardly endorsed the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles in October [as published] 1993 amid a sharp division in the 'Arafat-led Fatah Movement—will take a harder position on the peace process, now that the negotiations with Israel have stumbled and the PA's gains from this process have been meager."

Yesterday, Palestinian sources expected that in its scheduled meeting in Tunis, the PLO Executive Committee will decide to suspend the negotiations if Israel does not amend its position during the coming meeting between President Mubarak and Minister Peres on two major issues; namely, halting the settlement activity in occupied Jerusalem—particularly a project to build a new circular road across West Bank lands—and the timetable for withdrawal from the West Bank towns and villages as a prelude to holding free elections in accordance with the Oslo-Washington agreement.

The sources added that the decision to unilaterally suspend the negotiations "was ripe in the Executive Committee's recent meeting in Cairo. President 'Arafat, however, did his best to delay making this decision in the hope that the diplomatic efforts made by some PA members in influential international capitals will prompt them to put pressures on Israel."

The possibility of holding a Fatah Central Committee meeting is still unconfirmed due to the sharp differences between President 'Arafat and most Executive Committee members, who reside in Tunis and Amman and who oppose the Oslo-Washington agreement.

Faruq Qaddumi, also known as Abu-al-Lutf, secretary of the PLO Central Committee and head of the PLO Political Department, has invited the committee members to meet in Tunis after 'Id al-Fitr. This invitation reflected the fact that the Central Committee members failed to convince President 'Arafat to call for a meeting in Tunis, and not in al-'Arish as he insisted.

AL-HAYAH has learned that Qaddumi sent a letter to 'Arafat early last month on behalf of the majority of the committee members. He urged 'Arafat to call for a meeting before the end of last month to discuss outstanding differences. Qaddumi stressed that the meeting should be held in Tunis and that the committee could then decide to hold the subsequent meetings in al-'Arish or Taba, as its chairman wishes.

It seems that President 'Arafat's failure to reply to the letter has prompted Qaddumi, in his capacity as the committee's secretary, to call for a meeting in Tunis. It is expected that such a meeting will be boycotted by the Fatah leader and four committee members residing in the territories; namely, Faysal al-Husayni, Zakariya al-Agha, Intisar al-Wazir, also known as Umm Jihad, and Nabil Sha'th.

Informed sources, however, said yesterday that it was likely that the Central Committee would hold a meeting in Tunis shortly before the expected Executive Committee meeting if President 'Arafat and his Central Committee opponents reach an understanding on "cooling down" the differences on the internal front in order to pool resources to confront the intransigence of the Israeli negotiators.

Fatah Committee To Meet To Discuss Peace Process

NC0603004095 London MBC Television in Arabic 2315 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Responsible sources in Tunis have confirmed to MBC that the Fatah Central Committee led by Yasir 'Arafat will hold a meeting in Tunis tonight at the invitation of its secretary, Faruq Qaddumi, alias Abu-al-Lutf. Ten members will attend, but the chairman of the committee and three other members—Nabil Sha'th, Intisar al-Wazir, alias Um-Jihad, and Abu-al-'Ala' are not attending. Sources there say that the Central Committee will discuss the peace process. Most of the members attending the meeting are opposed to the current progress in the peace process under the Palestinian president. Tomorrow these members may discuss the fate of Fatah's current leadership.

It is worth noting that 'Arafat failed to convince Faruq Qaddumi and Mahmud 'Abbas to attend the PLO Executive Committee meeting that was held in Cairo approximately two weeks ago. Qaddumi and 'Abbas declined to attend because of their opposition to the way the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations are being conducted under 'Arafat.

'Arafat's office tonight denied awareness of any meeting. 'Arafat's information adviser Nabil Abu-Rudaynah said that a similar meeting was scheduled to be held two days ago but it was not held. He gave no reasons for that, however.

President 'Arafat's confidants stressed that a two-thirds quorum was not obtained because of the absence of Abu-al-Adib, Zakariya al-Agha, al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, and Faysal al-Husayni.

'Arafat Requests Postponement

MM0603152195 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 6 Mar 95 p4

[Report by Salih Qallab: "Fatah Central Committee Will Not Meet in Tunis Today"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman—Informed sources yesterday confirmed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat requested postponement of the Fatah Central Committee meeting scheduled for today until 13 March.

The sources said that 'Arafat notified Faruq Qaddumi, the committee's secretary, that he would not be able to go to Tunis because of prior engagements for that period and also because U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit made it necessary for him to stay in Gaza.

Acccording to the same sources, some Fatah Central Committee members insist that the scheduled meeting should be held today while at the same time keeping the discussions open until 13 March, the date suggested by 'Arafat. But the problem in this case would be the lack of quorum required under Fatah's bylaws. [passage omitted]

PA Said Facing Pressures To 'Internationalize' Areas

JN0603133695 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 6 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The Fatah Movement, the biggest PLO faction, has attacked Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat for his continuous monopolization of Palestinian decisionmaking. The movement said that the recent meeting held by the PLO Executive Committee in Cairo was illegal and lacked a quorum. Fatah said that the PLO Executive Committee will soon hold a meeting in Cairo, which will be attended by PLO Executive Committee members Faruq Qaddumi and Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, who boycotted the first meeting. Fatah added that they will both carry a decisive stand adopted by the Fatah Central Committee on developments in the Palestinian arena. In its recent internal bulletin of limited circulation, a copy of which was made available to AL-ASWAQ, Fatah said that the Palestinian Authority [PA] is facing pressures to internationalize the Gaza Strip and to bring in non-Palestinian forces to take over security responsibilities in the West Bank. Fatah said that armed struggle by all factions is a legitimate right in order to confront Israel. It explained that the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations are nothing more than a dialogue of the deaf and that Israel will not implement the agreements except under the condition of terminating the Palestinian opposition movements.

Cabinet Discusses Peres Statements, Christopher Visit

JN0603075895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers of the Palestinian National Authority held its weekly meeting yesterday under His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat. The council lauded the manifestations of joy and support expressed during the 'Id al-Fitr holiday. It especially noted the flocking of thousands of citizens to offer their congratulation on the holy 'Id al-Fitr for the first time on a liberated land of Palestine.

The council discussed the deteriorating security situation in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the statements by Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, which showed a clear pullback on the Declaration of Principles agreement. It said that these statements prejudice the final solution.

The Council of Minister made a number of decisions to prepare for the meeting between the president and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Friday.

The council was briefed by the president on the current preparations for convening the PLO Executive Committee in Tunisia later this month.

After discussing the cadre of employees, the Council of Ministers decided to set up a committee under Finance Minister Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi and with the membership of Dr. Nabil Sha'th and Zakariyah al-Agha. The committee will refer its final recommendations to the council during its meeting next week.

Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat presented to the council the draft law on Palestinian local rule. The draft will be studied and proposals regarding it will be presented prior to its ratification in the upcoming meetings.

Dr. Nabil Sha'th said the Palestinian National Authority will use Warren Christopher's tour of the region next week to ask the United States to reactivate the peace talks. Sha'th said: There are significant issues that we will discuss with Christopher.

He said the ministers discussed the situation Israel is imposing on the Palestinians through freezing talks on the interim and final stages of the peace agreements.

Qaddumi Said Planning To Split From 'Arafat's PLO

NC0403100495 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 22 Feb 95 pp 1, 11

[Report by Badra Bakhus al-Fighali in Paris]

[FBIS Translated Text] Western political sources with experience in the Palestinian internal affairs have disclosed the emergence of a splinter movement within the PLO led by Faruq Qaddumi, alias Abu-al-Lutf, head of the PLO Political Department, who still uses Tunisia as a base for his political activity.

The Western political sources affirm that despite the blackout about the split, leaks started to emerge by both sides following the recent meeting of PLO envoys accredited to Europe and some Arab states. Qaddumi has called for the meeting in a bid to sound out their actual views should he decide to split from the Yasir 'Arafat-led PLO. According to the same sources, only five envoys representing the PLO in eastern Arab states and African states have voiced their support for Abu-al-Lutf's step, while three other ambassadors expressed their implicit backing for the measure provided it is peaceful and does not involve blood shedding.

The same sources point out that Abu-al-Lutf's step is not a leap into the unknown and that there is a good chance it will be successful and peaceful, proceeding from the following facts:

1. The head of the PLO Political Department has been in control of most of the PLO's money since 'Arafat's return to the self-rule areas.

2. All payments made to Palestinian embassy staffers abroad are conducted through the office of Abu-al-Lutf, who personally approves the dispensing orders that are mostly issued by Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat.

3. The opening of credits as well as the allocation of funds for rebuilding and rehabilitating the infrastructure in the self-rule areas are done through the Political Department in Tunisia.

In addition to the financial aspect, there is also a political side to the issue, which is more significant in view of the regional and Arab dimensions. According to the same Western sources, the head of the PLO Political Department enjoys clear support from Jordanian King Husayn and, naturally, the blessing of the United States.

The "tripartite support" for Abu-al-Lutf's step is based on the fact that he is the only person qualified to resolve the issues that go beyond the implementation of what is left of the Declaration of Principles, which was signed in Washington on 13 September 1993, chief among them is broadening the self-rule authority to include other West Bank areas.

The Western sources note that Israel absolutely does not want to redeploy its army in these areas for 'Arafat to incorporate them into the self-rule authority. Israel believes that the West Bank's future is in being annexed to Jordan. As for 'Arafat, he should be satisfied with what he has now, particularly since he has proven his inability to fully control the security situation and to halt suicide operations carried out by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad elements.

Baghdad Trip Seen as 'Polarization' Move

MM0303155795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 3 Mar 95 p3

[Report by Salih Qallab: "Fatah's Central Committee To Meet in Tunis Next Monday; Saddam Husayn Refused To Receive PLO Delegation Headed by Qaddumi"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman—Following the extensive contacts held throughout last week, it has been decided that Fatah's Central Committee will meet in Tunis next Monday, immediately after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday, to discuss the stalled peace process on the Palestinian track and Israel's reluctance to implement the second phase of the Oslo agreement, and also identify the issues to be discussed by the [PLO] Executive Committee's next meeting, for which the committee's recent Cairo meeting is supposed to have paved the way.

Although some Palestinian sources do not expect Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat to attend the meeting because he insists that the Gaza Strip, not Tunis, is now the seat of Palestinian jurisdiction, more than one Fatah Central Committee member has stressed that Abu-'Ammar ['Arafat] will attend because he needs to revive the old frameworks which have been frozen for over six months, since the implementation of the second phase of the Oslo agreement began to stumble.

In preparation for that meeting, to which Faruq Qaddumi (Abu-al-Lutf), head of the PLO Political Department, was officially invited in his capacity as Fatah Central Committee secretary, the Fatah Central Committee members abroad have prepared a number of points to form the agenda to be discussed at next Monday's meeting.

There are three of these points which the Fatah Central Committee members abroad insist on including in the agenda: suspension of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations for a period to be agreed upon, formation of a leadership group to supervise the negotiations and replacement of the current negotiating team, and initiation of a "serious" dialogue with all Palestinian factions which are opposed to the peace process and which just have objections to the performance of the Palestinian leadership.

In this connection, a Fatah leader has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that acceptance of these points by 'Arafat would motivate all the Executive Committee members who had previously resigned or suspended their membership after the announcement of the Oslo agreement to reconsider their position and resume their normal work within the official Palestinian frameworks. [passage omitted]

Palestinian sources in positions of responsibility firmly believe that even if 'Arafat attended the meeting, he would not in any way agree to suspend the negotiations with Israel or change the Palestinian negotiating team on grounds other than the Oslo agreement and the peace process.

It is worth noting here that some people saw Faruq Qaddumi's recent visit to Iraqi, on which he was accompanied by Fatah Central Committee Member 'Abbas Zaki, as a move to secure additional trump cards and polarization in view of the widening gap between what may be called the Fatah leadership group inside [the occupied territory] and its leadership group abroad after Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin) and Faruq Qaddumi declined to attend the PLO Executive Committee's recent meeting in Cairo.

But sources close to Abu-al-Lutf denied that that was the purpose of his visit to Baghdad, adding that there was nothing more to it than the fact that contacts were held with numerous Arab countries and that it was necessary to include Baghdad in these contacts.

Noticeably, Abu-al-Lutf made a point of passing through Damascus immediately after his visit to Baghdad on his way to Tunis. It was not known if that was in the course of a mediation between the two estranged capitals or just a quest for Syria's approval, bearing in mind that Syria does not approve of any contacts between the Palestinian leadership and the Iraqi leadership.

It is also worth noting that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn did not receive Abu-al-Lutf and the accompanying delegation which persistently expressed an interest in meeting with him when it was received by Iraqi Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan and Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz.

Saddam Husayn's refusal to receive the Palestinian delegation was understood to be a clear message to the United States and the West that he did not support the Palestinian leaders and forces opposed to the Oslo agreement and the peace process, and also a message to 'Arafat that Iraq had no intention of interfering in Palestinian internal affairs at this critical and sensitive stage. [passage omitted]

'Urayqat: Israel Using Blackmail; Process Failing

TA0503072695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The closure has been eased again: Another 3,500 permits for work in Israel will be distributed to territories and autonomy residents as of this morning. Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, who is responsible for municipal affairs in the Palestinian Authority [PA], says Israel is adopting a policy of blackmail and this lead to a disruption of the peace process. Our correspondent Dani Zaqen reports:

[Begin recording] [Zaqen] Due to the dire economic straits in the territories and the autonomy, the prime minister decided on Friday, following a meeting with senior defense establishment officials, on additional measures to ease the closure. This will include the granting of 3,500 work permits to people employed in industry, commerce, agriculture, and tourism, on the basis of criteria such as age, family status, and, of course, a clean security record. Israel will also allow 750 Gaza Strip students to attend their classes at Judaea and Samaria academic institutions.

Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, who is in charge of municipal affairs in the PA, says Israel's policy vis-a-vis the Palestinians is one of blackmail.

['Urayqat, in English] The Israeli Government, instead of acting like partners and really pushing and helping—and they do understand that we really need to start from scratch as far as the West Bank and Gaza economies and the Palestinian economy is concerned—but yet they use this blackmail policy and this provocation policy, which is not serving us or Rabin at the end. He is like shooting himself in the foot and shooting our feet along with his. This peace process, with the way the Israeli Government is handling it now, is going down the drain, so they need to stop and think: They want peace or not. I don't think we can be somewhere in between like a baby that's half born.

[Zaqen] 'Urayqat also reacted to remarks Foreign Minister Peres made to DER SPIEGEL yesterday and said that Israel is demanding of the Palestinians what it could not do itself during the 27 years it controlled the Strip. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 0500 GMT on 5 March reports that in an interview to DER SPIEGEL, Peres "threatened to break off negotiations with Yasir 'Arafat if the PLO leader cannot get Islamic extremism in the territories under control."]

PA Member Views Oslo Agreement, PA Role, Hamas

NC0303115195 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27 Feb p 8

[Interview with PLO Executive Committee member 'Abdallah Hurani by 'Abdallah al-Sinawi; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Sinawi] How do you view the Oslo agreement now, after this relatively long period?

[Hurani] We now have the opportunity to see the "Oslo agreement being implemented." My frank and brief reply to you is this: I am more convinced of the stance I took when I opposed the agreement, when I rejected it, and when I said I considered it a national crime against our people and its national and pan-Arab cause. I have found out that the agreement, its implementation, and its effects are worse than all the criticism we issued against it and that the dangers are greater than those we anticipated when we read the text of the agreement.

It even appears to me at times that we were "moderate" in our opposition to the Oslo agreement. It came to solve "Israel's" problem in the Arab world and at the same time it sacrificed the national and legitimate Palestinian rights. These are in fact the "Israeli objectives." The West cares only about Israel's security and about opening the Arab doors that are closed to it. Israel could not reach the Arabs except through the Palestinian door. No Arab country or party could sign an agreement on opening up to Israel or normalizing relations with it except through that same door. The Palestinian leadership has wasted this "card." I believe that the Israeli objective in having the Palestinian solution in "two stages"—one transitional and one final, with five years in between—is to open Arab doors during these years and to sign normalization agreements with the Arab countries. The final solution might then become the transitional one but in a truncated form, because the Israeli implementation of the Oslo agreement leans less toward implementation and more toward reneging on its commitments.

[Al-Sinawi] There is a supposition—as signalled and witnessed in practice and by the clauses of the agreement itself—that the Palestinian Authority [PA] is merely a "tool for the occupation." How do you view the future of the PA?

[Hurani] The PA does not wish to be a tool in the hands of the occupation. But the agreement's conditions, implementation, and the Israeli retractions are pushing this authority to play an unwilling role in protecting Israeli security. This puts the PA in an extremely embarrassing position before its people, particularly as it is getting nothing in return, or very little for its security role.

[Al-Sinawi] Is there a way out of this?

[Hurani] The PA can declare "very loudly" that it is not responsible for protecting Israeli security in the areas occupied by Israel and that the PA is only responsible for security in the self- rule areas, which today do not exceed the Gaza Strip and the small area of Jericho.

It can then declare clearly and frankly that there can be no solution without the departure of the occupation and the cessation of settlements and that the PA cannot set itself up as the protector of occupation and settlement. Why are our people deprived of the "resistance" right? Why are all the national forces deprived of this right, including the forces that are affiliated with the PA? The occupation will not leave until it starts to feel that it is impossible to stay. It is not difficult to find a program for integrating national action among all the national parties and forces so that enmity for the occupation becomes the slogan and demand of all these forces.

[Al-Sinawi] But the Oslo agreement itself undermines such a possibility, does it not?

[Hurani] If Israel itself is trying to evade and bypass what it committed itself to in Oslo, even though the agreement as a whole was in its favor and was reached under its dictates, what prevents the Palestinian side—the one harmed and shortchanged on its rights in the Oslo agreement—from acting indirectly if it cannot act directly to bypass the agreement and to try at least to put pressure to improve the conditions?

[Al-Sinawi] Does such a choice not presuppose that the PA should first stop pursuing the opponents of the occupation, the arrests, and the setting up of state security courts?

[Hurani] No Palestinian hand should arrest, kill, or pursue a Palestinian party as long as the latter is resisting the occupation. This resistance has been and remains legitimate as long as there is occupation.

[Al-Sinawi] What is your present view of the "acute polarization" between "Hamas" [Islamic Resistance

Movement] and the "Authority" and of the new Palestinian political map as a whole?

[Hurani] There are two polarization centers: the "Authority" and "Hamas." When I say authority, I do not mean the forces affiliated with it. The authority's organs have become more prominent than these forces in the process of polarization. On the other side, we see "Hamas," its policies, and its practices. No one can belittle "Hamas," its role of mobilization inside the occupied territories, or its policy of resisting the occupation which continues to enjoy popular support. But its masses combine the actual masses of Hamas and the "angry Palestinian" masses that do not belong to Hamas. The circles angry with the occupation on the one hand and which are not convinced by the PA practices on the other cannot express themselves except through the "Hamas facade."

Yes, the other political forces are present in the arena but to varying degrees. I say frankly that there are factors that confuse and weaken these forces' influence. The most important of these factors are found abroad. The leaderships abroad and those inside differ on assessing and dealing with the new reality. The decision is ultimately in the hands of the leaderships abroad and not the ones inside and this creates the confusion. The second confusion is caused by the fact that these forces now have to face a gray area for the first time, that is, the issue has always been "black and white," but now they are faced with a third party called the PA. Is this authority hostile to them or not? Will these forces agree to become administratively involved? If they have a stand on political involvement at the top level of the authority, what can their stand be on the administrative involvement in the PA's establishments, either the civilian administration or the military security? They are also particularly confused by the people's need to earn a living, salaries, and incomes. To this is added the groups' experiment in the national Palestinian action. There is the view that these groups have exhausted their purposes.

New factors have now emerged. How will they deal with these factors? Will they turn into parties or will they restore their role in the armed struggle, and how? What is their margin for action and can they abide by this margin?

[Al-Sinawi] In light of all this criticism of the Oslo accord, do you think that there is some contradiction between these radical criticisms and your entry to Gaza?

[Hurani] Of course not. My family is from the Gaza refugees.

After the accord was signed, I found out that I had the opportunity to return to the homeland or rather to a part of the homeland although it is not the return I have dreamed of all my life. Although I have not returned to my home village from which I was deported as a child, I found out that I could still be closer to the homeland. Second, I wanted to be among my people where I can be more influential.

[Al-Sinawi] Have you met Yasir 'Arafat in Gaza?

[Hurani] I met him during both of my visit to Gaza and I was frank with him and sincere with myself and my convictions.

[Al-Sinawi] Was there any response by 'Arafat to your views and concepts that you presented to him?

[Hurani] He listened.

[Al-Sinawi] Do you sense any opportunity to revive the PLO or stimulate its role in the next stage?

[Hurani] I do not say this is easy. Unless the notion is instilled in the people's conscience and unless it becomes an urgent, daily, and public demand so that all forces, institutions, and people rally around this cause, I am afraid it will be too late.

[Al-Sinawi] Was there not any use, even little use, in remaining in the Executive Committee and in making this leading institution assume its role?

[Hurani] Undoubtedly the PLO is now in a difficult situation. The Executive Committee, as a leading body, exists theoretically but practically its role is almost absent. The reason is because it does not meet, debate, and review what had been happening although under its bylaw, the Executive Committee is the reference body for and the supervisor of the PA. The Executive Committee is the one which is supposed to review and assess the situation in all issues and matters, but it does not exercise this role.

I am afraid it is unable to assume this role because the PA now regards itself as replacing the Executive Committee and handles issues concerning the Palestinian cause. In other words, the PA plays both roles, the roles of the PLO and the authority itself.

This mix-up in the roles restricts the scope of movement or maneuver against the enemy. The PA cannot claim that it will turn to the "institution" or to the "reference body" because Israel would instantly say "you are the institution and you do not have to refer to anyone else."

[Al-Sinawi] Do you see that the proposal made by Palestinian leaders, such as Dr. Sidqi al-Dajani and Dr. Clovis Maqsud, to separate the PLO and the self-rule stands a chance?

[Hurani] From the beginning I suggested that no member of the Executive Committee should join the PA so that the committee would remain as the reference body. I fear that this solution may not be possible.

Hamas Said Considering Truce With Israel

NC0503101695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0940 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 Mar (MENA)--Engineer 'Imad al-Faluji, director of Gaza's Islamic

Society and a prominent Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader, has revealed that the movement is drawing up a new political program comprising several points, one of which is that Hamas would accept a 5-to-10-year truce with Israel during which time the latter would withdraw from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, evacuate the settlers, and pull out of Jerusalem.

In an exclusive statement to the newspaper AL-'ALAM AL-YAWM published today, al-Faluji explained that Hamas' new program includes holding free democratic elections to choose a Palestinian legislative council. He said that this council would in turn elect the Palestinian Authority's chairman.

Al-Faluji said that the proposed truce should not deprive the Palestinians of the right to demand to return to their homeland.

The newspaper pointed out that this is the first time that Hamas has proposed such a program, particularly as it refuses to recognize Israel as a legitimate state.

Police Arrest Hamas Preachers, Militants

NC0603085595 Paris AFP in English 0756 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, March 6 (AFP)—Palestinian police have arrested two prominent Hamas clerics and two militants wanted by Israel, sparking a protest in southern Gaza, a senior member of the group said Monday [6 March].

'Imad al-Faluji, a leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) told AFP that the militants from the southern refugee camp of Rafah were detained late Saturday.

Muhammad Abu-Shammalah and Ra'd al-'Attar were wanted by Israel for taking part in the murder of informers during the occupation of the Gaza Strip that ended with the launch of Palestinian autonomy last May.

Al-Faluji also said the clerics, Shaykh Salamah al-Safadi from Gaza City and Shaykh Ahmad Nimr from Khan Yunus refugee camp, were held after they gave sermons critical of the PLO last Friday.

About 400 people marched through Khan Yunus on Sunday night, carrying banners condemning the arrest of Shaykh Nimr and demanding his release.

"We protest the arrest of Shaykh Ahmad Nimr for having said the truth," read one of the banners.

In his sermon, Nimr, 54 accused PLO chief Yasir 'Arafat's self-rule Authority of bowing to Israel and said the autonomy agreement was weak.

"I expect the arrest of Shaykh Nimr to produce trouble in Khan Yunus, he was a very popular preacher," al-Faluji said.

At the Hamas-controlled Palestine Mosque in Gaza City, al-Safadi accused 'Arafat's intelligence services of torturing prisoners, and called them "supporters of tyrants."

'Arafat has been under pressure from Israel to rein in Islamic militants opposed to the autonomy accords. Some 20 Hamas members have been detained in the last month, as well as about 60 from the smaller Islamic Jihad and the leftist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Algeria

Country To Receive Over $1 Billion From IMF

LD0403194495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Over $1 billion is the amount which Algeria will receive over three years under the initial agreement between Algeria and the IMF. Financial facilities will also enable another part of the foreign debts to be rescheduled.

[Correspondent] The initial agreement between Algeria and the IMF on financing facilities which was announced last week will culminate in Algeria obtaining financial aid of $1 billion over three years. According to the head of the Middle East department in the IMF, Algeria and the IMF have reached an initial agreement and it is expected that they will reach a final agreement in Washington with the IMF director general. [passage omitted]

New Investment Agency Created With Wide Powers

LD0503140995 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister's office has announced that the Investment Promotion, Support, and Follow-up Agency will commence its activities as of 8 March.

The prime minister's office stressed that the Agency, which constitutes the corner stone for the practical take off of investment, was created to encourage and prepare the economic operators to invest in the country.

The Agency will have the powers originally invested with the ministry of small and medium size industries the moment it starts its work looking into the investment and related operations files.

The prime minister's office would like to inform the economic operators that they can direct their investment applications as well as other requests to the office of the Agency at El Biar district in the capital Algiers.

Statistics Released on 1994 Civilian Casualties

LD0403175395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The number of civilian victims of terrorism during last year, 1994, is estimated at 8,677, according to a statement from the security services issued today. The number of those killed was 6,388, and the number of those wounded was 2,289.

Skilled workers were the most frequently targeted segment, with a total of 1,800 assassinations and 96 woundings. Then came unskilled workers, of whom 1,384 were killed and 1,039 were wounded.

Security Services Report 6,388 Killed

LD0403154895 Paris LCI Television in French 1500 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Now for two [as heard] rather macabre figures: 6,388 people were killed, victims of Islamist attacks, in 1994. That is the figure published today by the Algerian Security Services. [passage omitted]

Radio Reports Killing of Trade Union Official

LD0503190495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The security services announced that Mr. Saadane Salah was assassinated Saturday [4 March] outside his home in Baraki, in the eastern suburb of Algiers, by four armed criminals. The late Saadane Salah, 51-years-old, was an official of the regional section of the General Union of Algerian Workers. The security services added that its forces chased the criminals, who fled in a car. While fleeing, they ran over and killed a 16-year-old boy. The same sources also said that one of the criminals was killed and that the car used by the criminals was found later.

Security Forces Eliminate 28 'Criminals'

LD0403193095 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The security services today announced that the security forces eliminated 28 criminals during a number of operations which took place between last Tuesday and Friday in Algiers, Annaba, Mostaganem, Boumerdes, Oran, Mascara, Djelfa, Bouira, and Batna.

During these operations the security forces were able to recover quantities of arms and ammunition as well as two stolen vehicles.

Egypt

'Similarity' Seen in Egyptian, U.S. NPT Positions

NC0303190095 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 3 Mar 95

[Commentary by Zayn al-Ja'fari: "Will the Recent U.S. Position Persuade Israel To Settle the Nuclear Problem?]

[FBIS Translated Text] The last few weeks have witnessed intensive U.S. contacts with Egypt and Israel on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]. The contacts discussed each side's objection to the treaty, which the United States hopes will be renewed indefinitely next month. This wish is in line with U.S. President Bill Clinton's assertion yesterday [as heard] that limiting nuclear proliferation is one of the most important objectives of U.S. policy. Clinton said that the indefinite renewal of the treaty without preconditions is the best way to protect the world against the risks involved from some expansionist states' acquisition of nuclear weapons.

As a sign of his true intentions, Clinton announced in a speech before the Nixon Institute for Peace and Freedom the day before yesterday that he had decided to withdraw 100 tons of enriched plutonium and uranium, sufficient to produce several thousand nuclear weapons, from the Pentagon storehouse. The U.S. decision was meant to encourage world states to renew the NPT indefinitely.

On the other hand, Anthony Lake, the U.S. President's adviser for national security, said that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will resume his discussions of this issue with Egyptian and Israeli officials during his upcoming tour of the Middle East, to begin on Tuesday [7 March], in order to rejuvenate the regional peace process, which is going through a very serious phase that might bring it to a total stop. The reasons underlying this are numerous, but the most important are Israel's reneging on the implementation of the provisions of its agreement with the Palestinians and its insistence on not signing the NPT. This Israeli stance has forced Egypt to insist on to its principled position as repeatedly announced by President Mubarak. The Egyptian position is that the Israeli stance will preclude Egypt's consent to the renewal of the NPT. This Israeli position naturally poses a serious threat to the peace process.

The Egyptian position was clearly and candidly expressed by Mubarak in his address to the seminar on the future of peace in the Mediterranean basin, which was held in Paris. His excellency pointed out that we cannot conceive of a real peace in the region if military power is expanded with weapons of mass destruction, because this obstructs the confidence-building measures necessary for establishing an equal and just peace. Hence, Egypt has called—and still calls—for ridding the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction and appeals to all regional states without exception to sign the NPT.

It is clear that this Egyptian position annoys Israel very much, because it insists on not joining the treaty by using security excuses that are no longer acceptable, particularly since the region is on the threshold of an era of all-embracing peace.

What really surprises us is that even though Israel is unable to give a logical response to the Egyptian request, it still procrastinates, sometimes claiming that it is living in the middle of a sea of hostility, and at other times that the risk involved in the use of nuclear weapons would affect no state except Israel. This Israeli position is largely fallacious. What Israel refers to as the hostility around it has ended, or is about to end, thanks to the peace agreements signed so far. Moreover, should Israel use any nuclear weapon, destruction will extend to its neighboring states. This refutes the Israeli claim.

Hence, we say that the recent U.S. position on this issue and the discussions Christopher will hold in the region might open the door to an acceptable formula to settle this problem, a problem which threatens the regional peace process in its entirety. We assume that Christopher's upcoming tour of the region will be the most important of all his tours. The reason we assume this is the great similarity between the Egyptian and American positions, particularly in connection with the achievement of peace, security, and stability in the region, and even in connection with curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Our goal is the same even if our viewpoints differ in terms of approaches.

The question is: Will this U.S. position on the NPT help persuade Israel to reach an acceptable settlement of this problem?

Police 'Sweep' South, Arrest 53 'Militants'

NC0403235295 Paris AFP in English 2136 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 4 (AFP)—Police on Saturday [4 March] arrested 53 Moslem fundamentalist militants and seized 250 weapons in a huge sweep in towns and villages in southern Egypt, a daily paper reported.

The AL-AHRAM daily said in its Sunday edition that the 53 had been wanted on suspicion of being involved in attacks on security service officials.

Police also seized 250 weapons, including 48 automatic guns, and 3,000 bullets when they arrested five drug traffickers in Dronka, 400 kilometres (240 miles) south of Cairo.

The sweep happened in the Asyut Province, 380 kilometres (230 miles) south of the capital, which was the main stronghold for the outlawed al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah paramilitary faction until they were chased south into the al-Minya Province last autumn.

Meanwhile, al-Minya chief of police General Muhammad 'Abd-al- Fattah decided Saturday to transfer 30 policemen he accused of giving "false information" about a suspected militant attack on Friday.

Police had said one of their number had been wounded in an attack on the police station in a al-Minya village, but 'Abd-al-Fattah told the AL-JUMHURIYAH daily that the man had shot himself "by mistake and said he had been targeted by militants for fear of being punished," the paper reported Sunday.

Al-Minya has become a stronghold for militants waging a bloody campaign to topple the secular government which, according to a running toll, has left 671 dead since March 1992.

Iran, Sudan Blamed for Funding 'Terrorists'

NC0503083995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0610 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 Mar (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AKHBAR denounces some Islamic countries for spending part of their budgets—money better spent to meet the needs of their populations—to cause harm to fraternal Muslim countries, instigate plots, and hire agents and mercenaries to kill, carry out acts of sabotage, and terrorize peaceable citizens.

In its editorial today, the newspaper says that it was Iran that started these methods under the rule of the so-called ayatollahs despite that country's poor economic conditions. It was later joined by Sudan, whose government allocates huge sums to set up training camps for terrorists before exporting them to fraternal Muslim countries. AL-AKHBAR notes that Sudan does this although most of its citizens live below the poverty line.

The paper urges these countries to spend their money on things beneficial to their Muslim people in order to earn their loyalty and God's blessings.

Libya

Mandela Denies 'Lies' on Libya CW Cooperation

LD0403202495 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] South African President Nelson Mandela, winner of the al-Qadhdhafi international human rights award, has stressed that no-one can stand in the way of relations and cooperation between the Republic of South Africa and the Great Jamahiriyah. He has also stressed the depth of relations between the two sides, and their eagerness to support and develop them in a way that will serve the two peoples' aspirations for growth and progress.

On receiving the secretary of the Libyan Arab People's Bureau to the Republic of South Africa the day before yesterday, President Mandela highly praised the role played by the the brother leader of the revolution in supporting the South African people during their struggle gainst the apartheid regime. He noted that he has paid three visits to the Great Jamahiriyah in appreciation of that role.

He pointed out that he has been holding intensive contacts to find a just solution to the crisis between the Great Jamahiriyah and the Western states. He added that he had hoped that the crisis would be resolved as soon as possible, and he praised the civilized way in which the Great Jamahiriyah was dealing with the crisis.

Within the framework of its usual campaign of allegations and lies, the English intelligence radio, known as London radio [BBC World Service], has reported that South African President Nelson Mandela has said that he was concerned that some South African chemical weapons [CW] experts were visiting the Great Jamahiriyah.

President Mandela has denied the English radio's allegations and lies, stressing that this kind of cooperation does not exist between his country and the Great Jamahiriyah. President Nelson Mandela's denial of the allegations, fabrications, and lies of the English radio demonstrates the extent of the attempts by these mouthpieces to harm relations among peoples, and to involve the leaders and put them in embarrassing and false positions. [passage omitted]

Morocco

King Hassan on 'Plots' Against Islam

LD0303133395 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 3 Mar 95

[Speech by King Hassan II to the nation on the 34th anniversary of Enthronement Day at the Royal Palace in Rabat—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] In December 1994, the summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference was held in Casablanca. This summit came at an appropriate time. Islam, dear people, is present throughout the world and is spreading in all the continents, is fusing with the rest of the civilizations and cultures, and is overflowing with abundant potential and capabilities. Everything qualifies it to serve mankind in a spirit of sincere and loyal cooperation with the other communities.

However, the success of Islam and the triumph of its teachings and values creates for it a number of antagonists who provoke some kind of agitation around it which does not always turn into sympathy for it. Real plots are being hatched against Islam and its enemies often depict it as a being a school for hatred and a deficient, ossified, and bigoted religion.

What serves the mistaken views of the adversaries of Islam is the existence of fanatical elements in some Islamic countries. These people hoist the banner of Islam for one reason—namely, to vent their rancor and hatred and satisfy their thirst for power. They know full well that they can come to power only through the legal ways advcated by Islam itself. Because of such disgraceful behavior, the image of our religion has been tarnished in the eyes of others although the way it is perceived by observers has nothing to do whatsover with the eternal values of Islam and the teachings of the holy Koran and the pure sunna.

At the Casablanca summit, which was held under the slogan of fraternity and revival, there was full awareness of the danger threatening our religion. The conference succeeded, at the end of its proceedings, in defining the conditions and means which would give back to Islam its true dimension and present it as an open and tolerant religion capable of adapting itself to the process of development in the world. [passage omitted]

King Hassan on Government, Education, Economy

LD0303144395 Rabat MAP in English 1351 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Mar. 3 (MAP)—King Hassan II of Morocco reiterated Friday [3 March] his will to carry on efforts to set an alternation government in Morocco saying in a speech he traditionally delivers on the Enthronement Day falling on March 3rd, he was convinced "realism will triumph, eventually".

Last October 14, the sovereign made a proposal to opposition parties on the constitution of an alternation government, but the parties turned down the proposal, for they refused the presence of Minister of State to the Interior Driss Basri within the cabinet.

A right-wing majority government was formed on February 27th. the cabinet, King Hassan II said "will grant a particular attention to social aspects of our policy and to the promotion of the rural world (...)".

The Moroccan democracy "perhaps, is not yet perfect, but it is actual and perceptible at all scales. We, very early, when other ideologies prevailed in the world, chose a democratic system", he added stressing his will to improve and complete the democracy.

The sovereign also referred to the issue of education which is affected by "various shortcomings" stressing that teaching must be understood and designed in a coherent political framework to face future challenges and to render it supple to make necessary adjustments.

On economic matters, the king underscored the fondness of Moroccans for privatization specifying bids in privatization moves were five to six times higher to offered participations and that results to date went beyond the most optimistic expectations.

The monarch on the other hand called on the parties to the peace process in the Middle East "to courageously follow the markers set in Oslo, Madrid and Washington and rapidly and reasonably go through the stages set".

"Veritable plots" are hatched against Islam which is presented as "a school of hate, a misfit, frozen and non tolerant religion" when all proves it is a tool "to the service of mankind with a spirit of earnest and loyal cooperation with other communities".

Bomber 'Acted Alone' in Russian Consulate Attack

LD0303142195 Rabat MAP in English 1329 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Mar. 03 (MAP)—The author of the blast last Monday in the Russian Consulate in Rabat, Egyptian Khalid Ahmad Mahmud Awad, acted alone and has no affiliation to any known organization, a source close to the Interior Ministry said Thursday [2 March].

The enquiry set immediately after the incident specifies the man bore no beard as some press media reported.

"The instability marking his personality, his family life and professional career was well proven", the source explained adding Awad married many a time, the last one with a Russian living in Egypt, and was obsessed by insecurity.

Awad could hardly eke a living out of book selling and door-to-door salesmanship he unsuccessfully and intermittently practiced. The data and information were confirmed by Egyptian concerned authorities.

The made himself bomb he exploded. [sentence as received] The case was filed with justice, the source said.

Bahrain

Police Reportedly Clash With Demonstrators

Two Protesters Reportedly Killed

*NC0303205195 Paris AFP in English 1745 GMT
3 Mar 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Nicosia, March 3 (AFP)—Anti-riot police on Friday [3 March] fired live and rubber bullets as well as tear gas on the second consecutive day of clashes in Shiite Moslem areas of Bahrain, opposition leaders said.

Protestors demanding political reform and the release of prisoners set up barricades and stoned security forces in villages on the island of Sitrah, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain [IFLB] said.

A demonstration also took place in Karzakkan, a Shiite village on the road to al-Budayyi', east of the capital Manama, the opposition group said in a statement obtained by AFP in Cyprus.

The first demonstrations in the Sunni-led Gulf Arab archipelago since January 27 erupted on Thursday during celebrations to end the Moslem fasting month of Ramadan.

Witnesses said two demonstrators were killed but this was not confirmed by the IFLB. [passage omitted]

To mark the 'Id-al-Fitr feast ending Ramadan, the amir of Bahrain, Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, pardoned 100 people implicated in December's clashes, an official said.

Officials Deny Reports of Clashes

*NC0303222795 Paris AFP in English 2006 GMT
3 Mar 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, March 3 (AFP)—Bahraini officials on Friday [3 March] denied opposition reports that violent clashes between Shiite demonstrators and the security forces had taken place during and at the end of the Moslem fasting month of Ramadan.

The officials said in a statement carried by the official GULF NEWS AGENCY that the reports of "violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces" were "false and contrary to reality."

The country, an archipelago located next to Saudi Arabia, is enjoying "security, stability, and tranquility," the statement said.

Witnesses contacted from Cyprus and exiled opposition groups said protests had taken place Thursday and Friday in Shiite Moslem areas east of here.

Further on Denial

*JN0403070895 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0520 GMT
4 Mar 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 3 Mar (WAKH)—Responsible sources in the State of Bahrain have denied a news agency report that fierce clashes have taken place between demonstrators and police in Bahrain.

The sources told the Gulf News Agency that not one of the so-called incidents have taken place either during the month of Ramadan or during the 'Id. The sources said these reports are groundless and far from reality because security, stability, and tranquility prevail in the country.

An responsible Interior Ministry source said the public security forces have arrested Hasan 'Abbas 'Abdallah al-Marhun, 23 years old, from Sanabis, who works as a mechanic in a local contracting firm. He confessed that, with the help of others, he set fire to the Sanabis Sports Club on 28 February. He said they forced their entry into the club and set fire to a bus belonging to the club that was parked in the club's yard, after which they escaped.

In his deposition to the interrogating judge, al-Marhun said he is a member of a small group that carried out acts of violence and sabotage to destabilize security and stability in the country and that this group has been active since the beginning of the violence. From to timem, this group participated in riots and sabotage operations, and set fires in Sanabis and nearby areas.

The security organizations received three calls at dawn on 28 February reporting a fire at the club, in addition to two others [word indistinct] post office [words indistinct] heavy damages and a power-generator in a privately-owned building near the [word indistinct] area. The power generator was destroyed. The Civil Defense units and the Fire Brigade immediately controlled the fires and extinguished them before they could spread to other areas.

The on-the-spot technical inspection and the investigation carried out by the competent security authorities showed the three fires were intentional and were the result of premeditated action by saboteurs who want to harm the homeland and the citizens through desperate actions to extricate themselves from their isolation [word indistinct] resorted to setting fire and sabotage as their target. Their rancorous hands targetted facilities that offer social and sports services that benefit the inhabitants of the areas where these facilities are located.

The source stressed that based on their duty and their concern to protect security and stability in the country, the public security organizations warn that they will show no leniency to those who carry out such actions [word indistinct] destroying public and private establishments, and that they will adopt stringent security measures to enforce the law in order to spread tranquility in the country [words indistinct] the perpetrators [word indistinct] and from justice.

Saudi Arabia

Foreign Minister on Gulf Security, Iran, NPT

*LD0303234095 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2230 GMT
3 Mar 95*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Washington, 3 Mar—In Washington yesterday His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister, held a meeting with His Excellency U.S. President Bill Clinton in the presence of a number of U.S. Government officials. [passage omitted]

His Royal Highness subsequently met with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Washington. He also made a statement to newsmen at the State Department yesterday. [passage omitted]

His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal said: "We are very pleased with the continuous participation of the United States in the efforts to establish peace and stability in the Middle East. This will be one of the main subjects which we will be discussing during this visit."

Answering a newsman's question on the situation concerning the Iranian intentions in the Gulf His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al- Faysal said: "Our position is that we aspire to peace and stability in the Gulf region. We hope that the efforts which all the states of the area have been making will not be wasted as a result of the military armament."

He added: "We are concerned about the stability and security of the region particularly when the threats to the area have not come from outside the area but from inside the Gulf region. All the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] members states share this concern."

Asked if he had any comment to make about Iran, Prince Sa'ud al- Faysal said: "Iran is one of the most important states in the Gulf, therefore its policy in favor of stability or instability in the area is of concern to all the states of the region."

In reply to a question on the [Saudi] position on the renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT], Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal replied: "All the Arab countries want this agreement to continue and to be activated. We also want it to apply to all sides and states. There is an Arab stance on making the Middle East region free of weapons of mass destruction and this is what we want Israel also to participate in." [passage omitted]

Writer Says Jerusalem Mosque in 'Claws of the Jews'

JN0303191595 Al-Dammam AL-YAWM in Arabic 27 Feb 95 p 7

["Last Station" column by Tariq Ibrahim: "If Only He Heard al-Sudays"]

[FBIS Translated Text] I wish that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat had attended the prayers at the holy mosque in Mecca the day he performed the minor pilgrimage last week.

I wish he did so in order to hear the prayers of the Mosque's imam, Shaykh al-Sudays, who cursed the Jews and prayed for the Palestinians, appealing to almighty God to save the al-Aqsa Mosque from the claws of the Jews, support the mujahidin in Palestine, and liberate Palestine from the Jewish aggressors and usurpers.

I wish 'Arafat were present at the Mecca mosque that night to hear the sobs of the imam whenever he mentioned Palestine, the people of Palestine, and al-Aqsa Mosque in which he wished that he and the Muslims would pray one day before they die.

I wish that 'Arafat were present among the worshipers from various races, colors, and ages to understand their feelings while chanting "amen" after the imam. I wish he had noticed their tears, heard their sobs, and seen their bodies quiver for the love of Palestine and in sympathy with its people.

Palestine lives in the hearts of all Muslims with its religious and historical value. Therefore, it is not at all easy to accept sellouts or to concede any part of the Palestinian territory. Papers, signatures, and ceremonies will not make Muslims forget their duty toward the al-Aqsa Mosque and Palestine. The Palestinians and Muslims in general cannot regain their territory, position, and pride if they continue to pay allegiance to Jews and Christians and seek dignity and victory from the enemies of God. These are not our words but the words of our God, 'Arafat's God, and the God of the Palestinians and the world. If you open the book of God [the Koran] you will find what you seek but if you open the books of Shim'on, Rafa'el, and Weizman you will find only treachery, lies, betrayal, and ignominy.

State of Alert Reportedly Declared in Baghdad

NC0603152895 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The [words indistinct] has sent more military forces to north and south Iraq amid reports that the ruling regime has declared a state of alert in Baghdad.

The Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC] reported today that two army divisions and a tank regiment from the Republican Guards were among the forces sent by the Baghdad regime to the north and south of the country.

The UINC stressed that the ruling regime has positioned medium and heavy machine guns on government buildings and the ruling party's centers.

Government Forces Engage Kurdish Fighters in North

Troops Continue To Mass

LD0303135695 London Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation Press Release in English 1308 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Iraqi regime continues to mass it's troops in northern Iraq. The troops advanced towards Bany Makan in the Chamchamal area at 11:50 am, they were engaged by opposition forces in the town of Shoursh, the fighting continues until now.

30 Army Tanks Fire at Border City

NC0303193195 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reports from northern Iraq, fighting has escalated between units of the Iraqi Army and Kurdish fighters. Iraqi opposition sources have said that clashes erupted between the two sides in the city of Shoursh when Iraqi army troops pushed into the area. The sources added that Iraqi infantry battalions supported by 30 tanks fired intensively at the border city of Altun Kupri in Kurdistan.

'Military Source' Denies Buildup, Shelling

JN0303213695 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2110 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi News Agency today contacted a military source to inquire about the truth of the announcement made by Jalal Talabani's group that Iraqi forces have begun massing in the direction of the Chamchamal area, shelling positions there. The military source replied: These reports are absolutely baseless. No military concentrations whatsoever have taken place in that area and not a single shell was fired. It seems that these reports stem from the weakness of the military position of Jalal Talabani's group in his conflict with Mas'ud Barzani's group. This makes them tell lies in an effort to shuffle cards, each according to his own circumstances and connections.

Regime Forces Reportedly Shell Irbil

LD0403103795 London Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation Press Release in English 2159 GMT 3 Mar 95

[Received by fax]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Salah-al-Din, Iraq (3 March 1995)—The forces of the Iraqi regime have attacked the Ainkawa [placename as received] district of the town of Irbil using long-range artillery. Tens of shells exploded in Ainkawa at 7.45 pm this evening. This attack is part of the military campaign which has seen the Iraqi regime mass its forces in N. Iraq.

Opposition on Shelling of Chamchamal, Irbil

JN0403080095 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0600 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi opposition in Iraqi Kurdistan says the Iraqi Army has bombarded areas controlled by the rebel Iraqi Kurds for the third consecutive day.

A radio station run by the Iraqi National Congress, an opposition coalition based in Salah-al-Din, reported that Iraqi troops last night bombarded neighborhoods in southern Irbil.

A statement by the Jalal Talabani-led Patriotic Union of Kurdistan says the Iraqi Army continued its bombardment of Shoursh and Chamchamal. The two towns are located on the main highway linking Karkuk, which is controlled by the Iraqi Army, and al-Sulaymaniyah, which is controlled by the Kurds.

Further on Shelling of Irbil

NC0403161895 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] There are reports that the Saddam regime's forces shelled Irbil city with long-range artillery as part of an offensive against the north, apparently against the safe haven area proclaimed after the 1991 Gulf war.

The Iraqi National Congress said today that scores of artillery shells exploded in the [place name and words indistinct] last night, causing casualties but gave no figures.

There has been no (?comment) by Baghdad on opposition reports about the shelling of the site, which is regarded as a base for various world relief agencies that provide humanitarian aid to the Kurds.

Iraqi opposition organizations have expressed fear that Saddam might stage a new military campaign to distract attention from the Iraqi people's suffering caused by the regime's head, Saddam Husayn, by attacking his neighbors and threatening the region by waging two successive wars.

Western sources affirmed that forces loyal to Saddam Husayn are preparing for a series of attacks in northern and southern Iraq.

The sources said latest satellite information indicates that the Saddam regime has reinforced its positions in the north and south of the country, especially in areas close to the safe haven zone in the north which is defended by a Western air power stationed in [place name indistinct].

The sources added that the (?tank) forces in the north have taken up an (?offensive position).

These developments come two weeks after the Iraqi opposition forces' attack on the headquarters of [words indistinct] which [words indistinct] in an inspection tour to alleviate [words indistinct] on the regime.

An opposition spokesman told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the attack on the towns of [words indistinct] came as a test of strength for the [word indistinct].

Regime Shells Towns; Citizens Evacuate

JN0403174595 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1700 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The forces of the dictatorial regime in Baghdad shelled the village of (al-Sufayya) near (Aski Kalak) at 2000 on 3 March. As a result of the regime's artillery shelling of the villages of (Awyra) and (Shamshuna), most of the inhabitants of the village of (al-Sufayya) left their areas.

UINC, PUK Reportedly Join Forces

NC0503152995 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1507 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman for the Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC] has said that the UINC and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] have joined forces to confront the Iraqi regime's attacks.

According to a report compiled by the BBC correspondent in Istanbul and a broadcast by the BBC last night, the Iraqi army bombarded 'Aynkawah in Irbil, where several UN relief organizations are located.

Regime Closes 'Liberated Areas'

JN0503192295 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1817 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The tyrant continues to mass his troops in a significant manner on the borders of the liberated northern areas, particularly opposite al-Sulaymaniyah and Karkuk following the intensive artillery shelling of the cities of Kifri and Chamchamal, which the regime's artillery began on the third day of the blessed 'Id al-Fitr [Saturday, 4 March or Sunday, 5 March]. The Saddamist regime also closed all crossing points between Baghdad and the northern governorates.

For more details on the Saddamist aggression and the other military preparations [words indistinct] our correspondent in the northern part of the homeland has provided us with the following report.

[Begin recording] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The regime's repressive authorities continued to mass its troops on the contact lines [words indinstinct] Iraqi Kurdistan [words indistinct] the hal-Sulaymaniyah and Karkuk Governorates.

These forces, this evening, the third day of the blessed 'Id al-Fitr began an artillery shelling of Kifri. This occurred after they opened long-range artillery fire against the houses of citizens in Shorush in Chamchamal Governorate the night before last, and on the Iraqi opposition forces in [words indistinct]. During the last hours of the artillery shelling, [words indistinct] of the tyrant's forces, armored units along the contact lines with the liberated areas in an attempt whose treacherous and hostile objectives are no secret.

The regime's authorities have started to close the crossing points to the liberated areas and have dispatched armored forces to [words indistinct] and large forces to the Khanaqin area and blocked the road between Karkuk Governorate and Chamchamal. Before this, other military units [words indistinct] from [word indistinct] to Chamchamal.

Criminal 'Ali Hasan al-Majid [word indistinct] moving troops in the above areas [word indistinct] carry out an aggression against the liberated areas.

Reports we have received from Baghdad and Karkuk say that all the security bodies, the emergency forces, and the other units of repression have been placed on a state of extreme alert and [words indistinct] the Iraqi opposition forces are preparing to confront any barbaric aggression tyrant Saddam and his forces will launch.

For their part, the various media organs of the tyrant replied to the statements made by the Iraqi opposition officials who are in the northern part of the homeland by saying there are no Saddamist troop concentrations or artillery shelling against the northern part of the homeland. This is an obvious attempt by the regime to deceive the international public, including the United Nations, and the UN Security Council, in an attempt to peddle his forthcoming conspiracy of harming our liberated north. [end recording]

Opposition Figure on Situation

NC0403192795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 4 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Muhammad Bahr-al-'Ulum, member of the Iraqi National Congress' Presidential Council, by Abu-al-Qasim al-Khafaji; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Khafaji] Reports speak of Iraqi troops massing in the north and artillery skirmishes. Can you give us a picture of the latest developments?

[Bahr-al-'Ulum] Skirmishes between the regime forces and the Arab and Kurdish liberation army are still continuing. ('Ayntawa) in Irbil was shelled with long-range missiles at 1945 yesterday. There was a huge troop concentration by the regime around Kifri and Chamchamal coinciding with an intense bombardment that began at 2100 and lasted for 3-to-4 hours. Shelling is still taking place today in 'Aynkawah and Kifri.

The militia of brother Jalal Talabani [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan secretary general] moved to confront or to get ready for the regime's forces in Kifri. The militia of brother Mas'ud [Barzani, Kurdistan Democratic Party secretary general] also took up positions near Zakho. Dr. Ahmad Chalabi and the INC [Iraqi National Congress] army also left for Kifri.

The situation is still unstable, the news is unpleasant, and the regime's shelling of these areas is continuing. According to the latest reports, skirmishes are in progress.

[Al-Khafaji] In your view, what are the motives behind the Iraqi regime's movements and harassments in the northern area?

[Bahr-al-'Ulum] I believe that every time it is in trouble, the regime caries out some operation to distract attention. The regime has failed in all it attempts to lift the blockade; and [UN negotiator] Ekeus has returned. The regime was expecting his report to be in its favor, but it turned out that it was not. The United States indicated that it will be forced to use its veto if any of the Security Council members thinks of supporting Iraq.

In these circumstances, the regime is trying to create international confusion by acting against the north. It might also conduct an operation in the south to attract attention. These moves are clear and Saddam makes them whenever he experiences any political difficulty.

[Al-Khafaji] Has the Iraqi National Congress thought of taking appropriate measures if the regime continues its harassment of the northern area?

[Bahr-al-'Ulum] Yes, it has a plan and it has examined the issue. It is poised to work in the north as well as in the south. If the situation escalates further, the INC's stance will be made apparent in a positive measure, God willing.

Regime Attacks in Pirde Area

NC0603155095 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1514 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Early morning yesterday, the Iraqi regime's troops attacked the advanced positions of the heroic peshmerga forces in the Pirde area from three angles. The valiant peshmerga forces confronted the aggressive 'Aflaqite forces and managed to seize a number of military posts, capture seven soldiers, and seize 11 Kalashnikov rifles, two RPG rocket launchers, one [word indistinct] launcher, and a sniping rifle.

In another development, the 'Aflaqite regime's artillery has bombarded the area of (Gardasur), which lies between (?Qush Tepa) and Pirde in the Irbil Governorate. The barbaric bombardment has left citizen 'Umar Hamzah 'Abdallh martyred and three others wounded. The 'Aflaqite regime's artillery also shelled the villages of Shiw-a-Sur, Kani Rash, and (Naraja) in the Karkuk Governorate.

Gen. Al-Samarra'i Voices Support for Kurds

NC0303153595 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1519 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners, we have just received the following:

From Staff Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i to Mr. Jalal Talabani: We have just received the following message from the Free Officers' command in Baghdad: At a time when Talabani's forces are continuing their bold confrontation with the new Saddamist aggression targeted against certain locations of the displaced citizens, our command announces that the armed forces, led by the nationalist forces, will not stand idly by vis-a-vis the atrocities and persecution conducted by the Saddamist criminal clique against the Iraqi people. Our forces will crush the snake's head, which is currently about to face the people's revenge.

We urge the citizens in all the Iraqi towns to support their brothers. Iraq is one and its people are one. On God we rely.

'Free Officers' Urge Opposition to 'Saddam's Aggression'

LD0303205095 Salah al-Din Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation Press Release in Arabic 1800 GMT 3 Mar 95

[Received by fax]

[FBIS Translated Text] Salah al-Din, 3 Mar—A correspondent of the Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation in Salah al-Din has said that Staff Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i [former head of Iraqi military intelligence who defected to the opposition in the north of Iraq] received a message today from the command of the Free Officers in Baghdad deploring Saddam's new attack on the innocent citizens and his continuation of oppression and persecution of the [Iraqi] people. The message hailed the brave steadfastness of the national forces, pledging that the Armed Forces will not remain with hands tied, and it called on the people in all Iraqi cities to stand up to Saddam's aggression.

Regime Places 20 Officers Under Surveillance

LD0303212495 London Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation Press Release in Arabic 1800 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Salah al-Din, 3 Mar—A correspondent of the Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation in Baghdad has said that the head of the dictatorial regime has issued a number of orders to his security and oppressive organs in which he exclusively authorized his son Qusayy [younger son and head of Saddam Husayn's personal security apparatus] to take security decisions and follow up the implementation of security plans and resolutions.

The correspondent also said that the second point of a top confidential letter from the [Ba'th Party] general secretariat of Iraq No 25281 dated 12 February 1995 has ordered the distribution of nine lists containing names of officers the dictator Saddam has ordered to be arrested immediately at any sign of popular unrest and to be referred to the Special Security [branch]. The third point of the same letter contained an order to intensify security suveillance and shadowing of the officers named below:

1. Staff Lieutenant General Sabih 'Umran al-Tarafah
2. Staff Lieutenant General 'Ali Muhammad al-Shallal
3. Staff Lieutenant General Shawkat Ahmad 'Ata
4. Staff Lieutenant General Ahmad Hammash
5. Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad 'Abd-al-Qadir
6. Staff Major General 'Ali Qasim Khudayyir
7. Retired Staff Major General Muhammad Ridha 'Athith
8. Staff Major General Khalid Husayn
9. Staff Major General Farhan Mutlak al-Juburi
10. Staff Major General 'Abd-al-Qadir Salman al-Khazraji
11. Staff Major General 'Adnan 'Abd-Dhahi al-Muhammadi
12. Retired Major General Tariq Mustafa al-Samarra'i
13. Major General Khalil Nasir Hassun
14. Staff Major General Ahmad Hashim 'Awdah
15. Major General Ibrahim Jamil al-'Ubaydi
16. Staff Major General Mahmud Fayzi al-Hazza'
17. Staff Major General Fadhil Ahmad Sabti al-Samarra'i
18. Staff Brigadier Hashim 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sha'lan
19. Staff Brigadire Dhiya'uddin 'Abd-al-Khaliq
20. Retired Staff Brigadier Khudayyir 'Abbas al-Samarra'i

SAIRI Leader Urges Unity Against Regime

NC0603155395 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ayatollah al-Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, has stressed that the sons of the Iraqi people need more patience and steadfastness to confront the regime's tyranny over them and that they have to protect their unity and cohesiveness since the regime is going through difficult conditions and is very weak, adding that this requires a steadfast stand by the Iraqi brothers against the regime in order to achieve their salvation in the near future, God willing.

In a statement to the Iraqi people, his eminence said: All the measures taken so far by Saddam's regime against the sons of the Iraqi people have failed, specially his attempt to eliminate the escalating jihad of our sons in Iraq that generally expresses the view of this people.

He added: The regime has also failed in its attempt to split the ranks of the Muslims, particularly between the Sunnis and Shiites. We have seen this cohesiveness between Muslims in the recent position taken by our brother Sunnis in the western areas of Iraq through which they expressed their real attitude toward the regime. This is in addition to the unity between the nationalities in Iraq: between the Arabs, Kurds, Turkomen, and the other minorities.

Concluding his statement, Ayatollah al-Hakim beseeched God Almighty to achieve the complete unity of the Iraqis, to hasten their hour of salvation, and to bless the efforts of the sincere ones to bring about the day of salvation and establish justice, independence, and peace in our wounded Iraq.

PUK's Talabani Calls On Army To Disobey Orders

NC0403164895 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1525 GMT 4 Feb 95

[Interview with Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] What does the fascist dictatorship aim to achieve by that military buildup along the contact lines with the liberated areas of Kurdistan?

[Talabani] The goal of the dictatorship is to seize what it believes is a favorable opportunity due to the fighting in Kurdistan. The dictatorship wants to put the yoke of injustice and despotism back on the necks of the Kurdish people in the liberated areas, particularly south of latitude 36, which the dictatorship believes is not covered by international protection.

The goal is clear. It is to keep up the old policy, the policy of enslaving the Kurdish people and Arabizing the area of Karkuk. In the past few days, the dictatorship expelled hundreds of Kurdish families from Karkuk and Khaniqin. It is keeping up the policy of Arabization and has seized this opportunity instead of complying with UN Security Council Resolution 688, which makes it incumbent on the dictatorship to return the displaced people of Karkuk and Khaniqin to their cities and villages. The dictatorship is keeping up its criminal policy to expel more Kurds and Turkmens from Karkuk and Khaniqin. These are the real goals of the military buildup.

[Correspondent] What do you and the Kurdish people expect from the brothers in central and southern areas to frustrate this criminal attempt?

[Talabani] The Kurdish people want, first of all, to prepare to defend the liberated area of Kurdistan and to deter the dictator's aggression. They expect their brother officers, soldiers, and noncommissioned officers in the Iraqi Army to refuse to carry out the dictator's orders, to prepare themselves, and to join the Kurdish people and all the free men of Iraq, particularly the powers gathered under the banner of the Iraqi National Congress, to overthrow the dictatorship and replace it with a democratic, parliamentary, federal, and multiparty regime.

[Correspondent] Do you have anything to say to neighboring and world states in this context?

[Talabani] We want the neighboring states to stand with [word indistinct] and the injustice the Iraqi people have suffered under the dictatorship. This dictatorship launched a war against us, against the Iraqi people, and against the Arab and Kurdish people. It launched a criminal eight-year war against our Muslim neighbor Iran and launched an aggressive war against the fraternal people of Kuwait. It was plotting aggression against Syria and Turkey, as well. Hence, this dictatorship is the root of corruption and crime. It is the source of real danger to the regional states.

Therefore, we expect the regional states to understand the just cause of the Iraqi people, as well as the just and fateful struggle of the progressive, democratic, and Islamic revolutionary power against the dictatorship. We hope we will get assistance from these states. If they cannot provide assistance, we hope they will take a neutral stance and refrain from providing assistance to the criminal Iraqi dictatorship.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much. May God guide your steps, and the steps of all the loyal people, along that democratic course.

[Talabani] Thank you. Greetings to all the brothers, particularly those who work seriously and actively in defense of the liberated areas and engage in the battle to liberate Iraq from the dictatorship and replace it with a democratic, parliamentary, multiparty, and federal system in the near future, God willing.

Radio Commentaries Urge Resistance to Regime

Army Urged To Defy Saddam

NC0603060895 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 0420 GMT 6 Mar 95

[Station commentary: "The Iraqi Army Is Called Upon To Stand by the People"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since the 'Aflaqite regime took power in Iraq, the Iraqi Army has turned into a tool for achieving the regime's aggressive and evil goals. The Iraqi regime used the Iraqi Army to launch a long-term war of attrition against the Kurdish people in Iraqi Kurdistan and in carrying out horrible acts of terrorism, atrocities, and torture against our Kurdish people, beginning with deportation, arabization, and the indoctrination of youths to adopt the Ba'th Party and ending with the bombardment of villages and residential areas with internationally banned chemical weapons.

The Iraqi Army was used as a tool of the Baghdad regime in kindling an eight-year war with the Islamic Republic of Iran. This war caused massive losses in lives and devastated Iraq's economy and resources. The Iraqi Army has been and is still used by the regime as a tool for suppressing the masses and hunting down patriots and revolutionaries and for striking at the growing resistance by the masses in southern Iraq. The regime has used the Army to violate human rights in the marshland area as shown by the use of chemical weapons against residential areas and poisoning and drying up the water resources of the area and evicting its population outside the borders.

The Iraqi Army has remained silent about the [words indistinct] which the regime's executioners carried out against hundreds of patriotic commanders, officers, and soldiers on the battlefronts with the Islamic Republic of Iran on (?charges) of cowardice and treason. We must say here that during the 1991 uprising in north Iraq, a number of Iraqi Army personnel decided to side with the people, thus taking a step that our Iraqi people highly praise. [passage indistinct]

Brothers, sisters, the facts that we have mentioned do not at all mean that the Iraqi people have lost faith in the Army. We still believe that the Iraqi Army is still able to restore the public's confidence in it, win the trust of the Iraqi masses by disavowing the Iraqi regime, and take the people's side, particularly as the Iraqi Army is now passing through a stage in which its soldiers, officers, and field commanders have become convinced that they have been turned into a means to fulfill the personal aims of Saddam Husayn and those of his despotic authorities to suppress the Iraqi people and exercise regional hegemony at the expense of the region's countries and nations.

Proceeding from their realization of this clear fact, numerous officers and soldiers who are full of nationalist zeal have abandoned the regime's ranks and joined the opposition's ranks to defend the people's and homeland's gains.

The Iraqi Army realizes now that Saddam's corrupt regime cannot now be in harmony with [words indistinct] and is likely to collapse and vanish [passage indistinct].

Based on these [word indistinct] facts, politicization of the Iraqi Army and turning it into an instrument of Baghdad's repressive policy is unfair to the Iraqi people. Let the brother officers and soldiers who were forced by the tyrannical regime and its repressive organs to remain silent about the crimes perpetrated against the Iraqi people understand that time is not now in favor of the Iraqi regime [words indistinct].

It is time for the Iraqi Army to change from an army belonging to a domestically and internationally repudiated and despised regime to an army of the people, an army serving the purpose of establishing security and stability in Iraq and the region.

Kurds Urged To Unite

NC0403173595 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1535 GMT 4 Mar 95

[Station commentary: "All Efforts and Resources To Defend the Liberated Areas of Kurdistan and To Protect Its Democratic Experiment"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The local and international media are carrying reports on the Baghdad dictatorial regime's massing of troops along its front lines with the liberated areas of Kurdistan, especially in the areas of Kifri, Chamchamal, Altun Kupri in the Irbil Governorate, and other areas along the border between the areas under the control of the [Kurdish] region's government and the areas controlled by the Saddamist dictatorship forces.

It appears that the Saddamist leadership, which is suffering from various economic, social, and political problems and from the low morale of its supporters and backers, is trying through a new military adventure in Kurdistan to divert everyone's attention toward Iraq's Kurdistan and to distract the Iraqi masses from their sufferings and real problems that are the result of the continued rule of the Saddamist leadership.

This leadership is trying to make the United States and the Security Council understand that it will not yield to the UN resolutions and that it is ready to commit any idiotic act if the Security Council does not lift the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq's dictatorship. This clear message from the dictatorial regime ignores the following evident facts:

1. If the dictatorial regime wants the lifting of the international sanctions, then it must realize first of all that the Security Council turns a deaf ear to efforts at pressure, threats of force, and military preparations; and that the coalition countries will not tremble with fear over the Iraqi forces' maneuvers and moves. These countries already have experience of Saddam's accurate calculations, his forces' abilities, and his military readiness against the international coalition forces.

2. The ruling dictatorship in Baghdad must realize that the question of lifting the sanctions depends on a number of international factors and resolutions which should be dealt with before any new page is turned with Baghdad's dictatorial regime. It should also realize that attempts at watering down the resolutions or trying to evade or bypass some of them are doomed to failure and that prevarication and cheating in dealing with them will only lead to wasting more time and will consequently increase the Iraqi people's suffering and agony. These resolutions include Resolution 688 which demands an end to the repression and the injustice imposed on the Kurdish people and the Shiite brothers in central and south Iraq by the Iraqi dictatorship.

3. The Saddamist dictatorship is blind to the real military situation and to the low morale of the Iraqi Army units, whose commanders, soldiers, and noncommissioned officers reject the wars launched by the Saddamist dictatorship against neighboring countries and against the Iraqi masses in Kurdistan and southern Iraq. It is also blind to the growing popular rage in central and southern Iraq at the regime's terrorist and repressive practices against all its citizens and at the regime's responsibility for the suffering, tribulations, and dire poverty they are enduring.

The Iraqi military's moves and massing of troops in various parts of the front lines with Kurdistan aim to expand the areas under the Iraqi dictatorship's control. This dictatorship is exploiting the regrettable infighting in Kurdistan. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] is trying with all its resources to end this infighting, get the situation back to normal, and restore fraternity between the two main parties—the PUK and the Kurdistan Democratic Party. The PUK will spare no effort and spurn no initiative to achieve this aim, especially as the real danger threatening Kurdistan's security, stability, democratic experiment, and all the Kurdish people's gains has started to appear near Kifri, Chamchamal, Altun Kupri, and other areas. This makes it incumbent upon the PUK Peshmergas and organizations and the supporters of all Kurdish parties who want to see the democratic experiment in Kurdistan succeed to prepare, unite ranks, put aside secondary differences and disputes, and mobilize all resources to defend the Kurdish people's gains and the democratic experiment in Kurdistan. This defense is honorable and legitimate, a defense of the Kurdish people and homeland. The dictatorship is trying to shackle this homeland and to reimpose its repression, injustice, and slavery on the Kurdish people in Kurdistan.

Kurds Urged To Confront Regime

NC0503074295 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 0510 GMT 5 Mar 95

[Station talk]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners, since the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] raised high the banner of armed struggle, it has considered the 'Aflaqite regime in Baghdad to be the enemy of the Kurdish people and of their liberation movement. The Baghdad regime's bestial practices against our Kurdish people have affirmed this fact. The Baghdad regime has consistently considered the goal of destroying the Kurdish people's legitimate national aspirations one of its priorities. The deportation of Kurds, indoctrination of the youths to adopt the Ba'th Party, arabization, and the bombardment of Kurdish towns and villages and the use of internationally banned chemical weapons against them are considered part of the Iraqi regime's plans to eliminate the national identity of the Kurdish people and melt them in the crucible of Arab nationality.

Now that an internal war of attrition is being imposed on the Kurdish people to destroy their democratic experiment, the Baghdad regime is massing its forces on the contact lines with the liberated areas of Kurdistan. It is trying again to eliminate our people's rights. The PUK, despite the fighting imposed on it by the influential leadership within the [Kurdistan Democratic] Party, considers the confrontation with the Baghdad regime and the mobilization of all resources and potential to expose its policies and practices to be an honorable national duty that requires all Kurdish and Iraqi parties to coordinate their plans and goals to contain the Baghdad regime's attempts and reckless adventures.

The Baghdad regime's military buildup along the contact lines with the liberated areas of Kurdistan affirms once again Saddam Husayn's aggressive intentions and the fact that he is not prepared to give up its subversive and aggressive role against the Kurdish people. The Iraqi stance runs counter to the current international position which rejects the Baghdad regime's policy, hostile as it is to the Iraqi people in general and to the Kurdish people in particular. This means that any military folly that the Baghdad regime might embark upon against the Kurdish people will be met with a firm international response, particularly since the alliance states consider that any direct threat to the Kurdish people in the Iraqi Kurdistan by the Baghdad regime to be a threat to security and stability of the region. These countries consider stability and security in this region to be extremely important and among their important political goals. We, therefore, consider that the internal differences in Kurdistan must be ended sooner or later. The Baghdad regime remains the main enemy and the danger surrounding our people in Iraqi Kurdistan and their democratic march. Let all parties unite their efforts to confront the Baghdad regime and expose its terrorist and repressive practices.

People in Kurdish Areas Said To Expect More Clashes

NC0603065195 Paris AFP in English 0033 GMT 6 Mar 95

[By Tolle Aram]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Salah-al-Din, Iraq, March 6 (AFP)—Kurdish hopes that self-rule in northern Iraq would usher in a bright new era have turned to despair as bloodshed marred the start of spring after months of winter warring.

A car bomb that killed 78 people in a busy market in the town of Zakho last week sent shockwaves reverberating through the region.

The parliament building in Irbil, once the proud symbol of a fledgling democracy, has been abandoned but for a hard core of MPs who have been staging an open-ended sit-in.

The assembly's president, Jawhar Namiq, told AFP: "We want the war between the parties to stop so the government can resume its work."

The Iraqi Kurds have controlled northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf War and held elections which resulted in a failed power sharing arrangement between the two main parties.

The feuding sides, Mas'ud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have been waging virtual all out war since last May in a conflict which has claimed 2,000 lives.

The KDP, which controls Zakho, accused Talabani of personally ordering last Monday's car bombing in a bid to disrupt lucrative trade with Turkey through the border town. The PUK rejected the charge and said it was the Iraqi government.

Staff from foreign aid organisations have been at a loss to explain the attack.

They find it hard to believe that the PUK would commit such an attack against its own people.

But on the other hand, "it doesn't make sense that (Iraqi President) Saddam Husayn would want to frighten Zakho's people and the Turkish lorry drivers who take petrol from Iraqi-controlled Karkuk to Turkey, thereby undermining international sanctions on Iraq," a member of a foreign NGO said.

Perhaps the only thing the two rival factions agree on is that there will be more of the same.

"There will be other attacks in Irbil (controlled by the PUK) and other towns, all carried out by the Iraqi agents," Kamal Fu'ad, member of the PUK's leadership, told AFP.

The last big battle between the KDP and PUK took place on the night of February 25 in Kasnazan, a suburb northeast of PUK-controlled Irbil.

More than 100 militia died and more than 50 were injured, according to independent sources.

A high-ranking UN official who did not want to be named said that the PUK had unsuccessfully attacked KDP forces ringing Irbil.

Trying to salvage peace from the mess is Ahmad al-Jalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), an opposition umbrella organisation.

"The situation looks like it is at a standstill, but it isn't," he said. "I'm hopeful of brokering a lasting agreement."

But al-Jalabi, who has acted as mediator since clashes erupted last May, conceded that no new meetings are planned.

A senior UN official said: "The Kurdish parties are burnt out."

"Therefore they may stop fighting each other. But the Kurdish experiment of democracy has definitely failed."

It all spells gloom for ordinary people at a time of year when Kurds usually revel in the end of the rigours of winter and welcome the optimism heralded by spring.

Life in Irbil appears to go on as normal but under the surface there is a deep depression and bitterness.

In the 12-storey high Sheraton Hotel, the highest building in the town which was used by a KDP-TV-station, not a single window remains.

Last week about 20 men laboured on the roof removing steel rods from the concrete —a ton of steel sells for 150,000 Iraqi dinars (3,000 dollars.)

The only good news is that prices for food and other goods have remained relatively stable.

But shopper Aminah Alikin said: "What kind of life is it if you always have to fear to go to the market?

"It really is desperate, nobody can guarantee security."

Another middleclass citizen of Irbil added: "It was never as bad as it is now.

"Under the Iraqis we had at least the hope of an alternative, the Kurdish parties. Now we have lost even that."

PUK Official on Regime Attacks, Zakho Explosion

NC0503183495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1746 GMT 5 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Kak Faridun, member of the PUK political bureau, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Faridun] The bombardment continues by the Iraqi regime troops. For the past two or three days, the bombardment has concentrated on the (Guyir)-Irbil road, Chamchamal, Kalak [name indistinct], Qush Tapah [name indistinct]. Our forces are present in the region to check any Iraqi offensive or any aggression by the Iraqi regime.

[Correspondent] What is the nature of the bombardment; what kinds of weapons are being used in the bombardment?

[Faridun] I think that they are mostly 122-mm and 130-mm guns and launchers.

[Correspondent] Do you link the Turkish move on the borders with the movement of the regime troops near Irbil?

[Faridun] So far, we have made no link between the two moves. We think that the Iraqi regime is an aggressor against all neighbors. Today there are secret talks with the Turks. One day the regime will commit aggression against Turkey. This is what we saw with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. We also saw it in the Iraqi regime's war against Iran. The regime then attacked Kuwait.

[Correspondent] The explosion that occurred in Zakho; do you think that the regime used that explosion to justify its current attack?

[Faridun] We are certain that these criminal sabotage operations were carried out by the Iraqi regime to terrorize the masses of Kurdistan and to cause confusion and create a schism inside the Kurdish community. This is clear to all regional states and peoples.

[Correspondent] Reports say that the PUK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] forces have evacuated the city of Irbil. Is this true?

[Faridun] So far, we have not evacuated the city of Irbil completely. We are in the course of negotiations with the Iraqi Shiite opposition parties, the INC [Iraqi National Congress], and the KDP [Kurdistan Democratic Party].

[Correspondent] The partial evacuation you mentioned; does it have anything to do with the regime's moves in the city, or is it only related to agreements among Kurdish factions in the region?

[Faridun] I assume that the recent Iraqi move is related to aborted efforts in the United Nations and international forums to lift the blockade on us. Whenever its foreign policy fails, the regime [words indistinct due to breaks in recording] the Iraqi people. You heard a few days ago about repeated Iraqi attacks against our brother Shiites in the south. The attack on Kurdistan is a continuation of the same aggressive approach toward the Iraqi people.

[Correspondent] Thank you.

Person Said Behind Zakho Explosion Arrested

NC0503152095 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An informed source in northern Iraq has affirmed that security agencies of the Iraqi Kurdish Administration have recently arrested a person believed to be one of tyrant Saddam's agents responsible for detonating a booby-trapped car in Zakho last week. The same source noted that the Kurdish agencies had obtained information confirming that tyrant Saddam dispatched a number of booby-trapped cars to the liberated northern region to cause instability and kill innocent inhabitants.

The explosion of the booby-trapped car in Zakho left approximately 80 people dead and more than 200 others wounded.

Explosion Reportedly Destroys 9 Hidden Helicopters

NC0403151995 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An explosion has occurred in a place where nine Iraqi Gazelle helicopters were hidden at an airport near the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. Our sources stress that the nine helicopters were totally destroyed. They noted that the Saddamite news media imposed a blackout on the explosion, which took place this month. The causes of the explosion have not yet been made known.

Iraqis in Jordan Warned of Intelligence Activity

NC0403174495 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources have warned Iraqis fleeing to Jordan from the oppression of the ruling regime in Baghdad of tyrant Saddam's intelligence agencies and security services, which have begun to intensify their activities in Amman. The sources said that senior intelligence officers arrived in Amman in the middle of this month [as heard], and that some of them left for Turkey for meetings with Rafi' al-Tikriti, the ambassador of the regime in Turkey.

It should be noted that the intelligence services of tyrant Saddam have perpetrated terrorist acts against Iraqi opposition members living abroad, killing or poisoning a number of them. A number of intelligence men working within the Iraqi diplomatic corps have also been arrested while planning inhuman crimes.

Paper: Buildup Charges Coincide with Sanctions Review

JN0503080995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0726 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 5 Mar (INA)—An Iraqi paper has said each time the review of the measures of the blockade imposed on Iraq approaches, the United States repeats shallow charges of alleged human rights violations or of an Iraqi buildup in the north or the south.

AL-THAWRAH, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th party, says that with the approach of the periodic review on 13 March and the submission of Ekeus' report on 10 April, Albright launched a deceptive campaign that expresses the U.S. Administration's concern about the growing and escalating international opposition to the unjust blockade imposed on Iraq in the absence of every justification for its continuation.

The paper says: Albright says Washington will veto any draft resolution designed to lift the blockade. However, Washington will not be able to intimidate the world and maintain the blockade indefinitely. The paper explains that the international community has become aware of the facts and that it is certainly capable of defending its own interests.

Opposition Says Fighting Breaks Out in South

3d Army Corps, Rebels Clash

NC0503082495 Paris AFP in English 0814 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, March 5 (AFP)—Fighting has erupted in southern Iraq between the army of President Saddam Husayn and Shiite Moslem opposition forces, the Iraqi opposition said Sunday [5 March].

The clashes broke out Saturday in the al-Qurnah region at the intersection of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, said the Iraqi National Congress (INC), a coalition of groups opposed to Baghdad.

Al-Qurnah is located in Iraq's southern marshlands 400 kilometres (240 miles) southeast of Baghdad, where Shiite Moslem opposition groups have been hiding since an abortive uprising against Saddam and his army in March 1991, a month after the Gulf War.

Opposition radio said Saturday fighting was taking place between the 3rd army corps and rebel forces in southern Iraq.

The Iraqi airforce cannot fly over southern Iraq as US, British and French warplanes have been enforcing an air exclusion zone over this area since 1992.

Washington, London and Paris say the no-fly zone is aimed at protecting the Shiite population in the region from Saddam, a Sunni Moslem.

The INC reported "fierce battles" in the same region on February 12 which forced the Iraqi army to withdraw.

The opposition coalition has also accused Saddam's army of shelling towns in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq in recent days including the main town of Irbil.

Kurdish groups say Baghdad is massing thousands of Iraqi soldiers on the edge of the safe haven, which has been controlled by Kurds in defiance of Baghdad and with allied protection since an uprising after the Gulf War.

However an Iraqi military official in Baghdad denied government troops were moving towards the Kurdish region or bombarding towns there.

Opposition Says Battles 'Continuing'

NC0503155595 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources in the Iraqi opposition have asserted that the battles that began in southern Iraq yesterday afternoon between Saddam Husayn's troops and the opposition forces are continuing.

A statement by the opposition said that battles are raging in al-Qurnah, at the meeting point between Tigris and Euphrates.

'Fierce Fighting' Reported in al-Basrah Area

NC0503153695 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1507 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to AFP, Iraqi opposition sources have said that fierce fighting has been raging between the Iraqi opposition fighters and the Iraqi regime's mercenaries in the al-Basrah area over the past two days.

The Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC] said last night that the 'Aflaqite regime bombarded several liberated areas in the Kurdistan region. The UINC added that a number of the regime's tanks were deployed along the border lines in Kurdistan preparing to launch an all-out offensive against Kurdistan.

Shiite Radio on Military Operations 'Last Month'

NC0503150895 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Our sources inside the homeland have affirmed the depth of the political and military defeat inflicted upon the Saddam regime following the operations carried out by the Iraqi mujahidin forces in southern Iraq last month.

The same sources added that following the liberation of the al-Baydah area of the al-'Amarah Governorate, five station wagons arrived on the second day of the operations at the region. When they realized that the area was fully under the control of our heroic mujahidin, they tried to escape from the scene of the operations. Our mujahidin, thanks to their alertness, prevented three station wagons from escaping and managed to capture senior regime officers who were inside the wagons. The captured officers disclosed that the regime's Defense Minister 'Ali Hasan al-Majid had been in one of the two wagons that managed to miraculously escape the fire of our heroic mujahidin.

PUK Radio: Southern 'Uprising' Means 'Final Salvation'

NC0503170095 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1622 GMT 5 Mar 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ladies and gentlemen: South Iraq is rising once again. The Iraqi people's battle against the fascist dictatorship has broken out like fire in a hay stack.

Citing the Iraqi opposition, Kuwait radio this afternoon carried a report on grinding popular battles in southern Iraq.

The history of the oppressed Iraqi people's struggle is now being written in glowing letters on bright paper. It reveals the angry popular uprising after long, bitter years of calamities, catastrophes, and genocide in Iraqi Kurdistan, the north, and the south. It is a long, bitter history of rule by oppressive institutions, during which Iraq's industry and economy were destroyed and the country was dragged back to the Dark Ages, the ages of underdevelopment and collapse.

What is happening now in southern Iraq is a major statement by the Iraqi people rejecting the authority of the bloody family of strong thugs, who were reared by the biggest old thief ever, [Saddam Husayn's uncle] (Faydallah Tufah), and then by the genius chemist Saddam Husayn. They were weaned on the ugliest techniques of crime, oppression, thievery, destruction of nature and annihilation of mankind.

Today is a phenomenal day in Iraq, a day that signals the final salvation. It is certainly the day of the people.

Rabin, Peres Offices Deny Meeting With Syrians

TA0303185095 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Next week Labor Knesset Member Avigdor Qahalani will leave for Washington to fight the intention to compromise over the Golan Heights. Our political correspondent Gadi Sukenik reports that Qahalani will be accompanied by Golan settler leader Yehuda Har'el and a public relations expert.

Other representatives of the Golan settlers will travel to Europe during the same period. They intend to investigate the truth behind the rumors that Israeli officers, including outgoing Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq, held meetings with Syrian officers in Brussels.

Senior political sources, however, told our correspondent this evening that no contacts were held with the Syrians, and that all the reports to that effect are baseless.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 3 March adds: "This evening the Prime Minister's Bureau and the Foreign Ministry denied reports about secret talks that are allegedly being held in Brussels between Israeli and Syrian representatives regarding security arrangements on the Golan Heights. According to these reports, the contacts are at a very advanced stage and are being held on the political and military levels."]

Rabin Reiterates Need To Withdraw From Golan

TA0503065295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister has reiterated that there is no way to reach a peace agreement with Syria other than a withdrawal on the Golan. He was speaking at Kibbutz Shefayim yesterday, and our party affairs correspondent Shmu'el Tal brings us his remarks:

[Begin recording] [Tal] Last night Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin stated anew that whoever says: Peace with all of the Golan is simply lying. Rabin is certain that most people will support an agreement with Syria in the referendum to be held when such an agreement is reached. He said there is no agreement about the line to which the withdrawal on the Golan will take place, but this is not the only uncertain point with Syria.

[Rabin] We have not agreed on how long the withdrawal to that border that has not been agreed upon will take. We said we want a very small pullback at the outset, and we want to test it over two and a half or three years. This test will involve full normalization: embassies, an open border. In the case of Egypt, at the time, we withdrew from half the Sinai and examined full normalization for two years and two months, and this followed al-Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. We surely have the right to examine normalization on the basis of a very small withdrawal and over a longer period than was the case with Egypt.

As for the stationing of U.S. observers on the Golan, over which an argument is being waged with members of the Third Way movement—including Avigdor Qahalani, who has come under a great deal of criticism as a result—the prime minister said it was actually the Likud that came up with the idea of U.S. supervision and control over the implementation of a military annex: Both Begin and Shamir demanded that the multinational force in the Sinai include at least 1,200 Americans, and there are 1,000 Americans there today, most of them in uniform. With regard to Syria, the reference is to the same function fulfilled by the Sinai multinational force—namely, supervision of the military annex of the peace treaty—but until a treaty is achieved, the prime minister declared, we do not want to see any U.S. soldier on the Golan. [end recording]

Beilin Rejects IDF Evaluation of Syria

TA0603074495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin has rejected the evaluation presented to the cabinet by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch according to which Syria has reached a strategic decision to make peace with Israel. Deputy Minister Beilin was speaking to our political correspondent Shlomo Raz. [passage omitted]

Sarid Rejects Beilin 'Doubts'

TA0603105295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Environment Minister Yosi Sarid said that the Israeli Government could not free itself of the assumption that it is possible to achieve peace with Syria this year. He rejected the doubts expressed by Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin about whether Syria has really reached a strategic decision to make peace with Israel.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Sarid asserted that an Israeli readiness to withdraw from the Golan Heights is a prerequisite for peace with Syria, but that any future agreement would be conditional on Damascus' agreeing to full normalization, satisfactory security arrangements, and a reasonable timetable. Minister Sarid stressed that these are the components of the package deal with Syria and that there is no point in searching for anything else.

Rabinovich Hopes Christopher Visit Leads to Talks

TA0403184195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 4 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Professor Itamar Rabinovich, ambassador to the United States and head of the Israeli delegation for talks with Syria, by No'omi Segal and Steve Linde in Washington on 4 March—recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Rabinovich] Our precise position is this: Direct negotiations between us were suspended by the Syrians at the end of December, and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is about to go to the region, and we very much hope that his trip will result in a renewal of these negotiations. During this period of suspension of direct negotiations by the Syrians, the Syrians and us continued to talk through the American peace team, primarily in order to prepare the secretary's visit and to prepare for the mutually anticipated resumption of direct contact.

[Segal] Did you make any progress in substantive issues in the informal contacts?

[Rabinovich] By definition, when we discuss indirectly—that is to say, when we work with the American peace team—we do not conduct real negotiations. The whole point of negotiations is direct negotiations. We realized, though, that it is a difficult one with periods of crisis and suspension, that we both need the intermediary role of the United States, and that when that happens, we mostly discuss the question of renewing the negotiations. The substance of the negotiations—namely, the issues of peace and security about which an agreement ought to focus, are discussed directly between the Syrians and us.

[Linde] Exactly what kind of security assurances does Israel need before any kind of withdrawal on the Golan?

[Rabinovich] If I may say so, what we are looking for is not so much security assurances as security arrangements. We are looking at such components as demilitarization, limited deployment, electronic monitoring, mutual verification and inspection. These are arrangements done bilaterally between the two parties whose purpose would be to reduce both the daily friction that has characterized the past relationship between Israel and Syria, as well as the danger of a larger war between the two countries.

[Linde] Can we expect an agreement between Israel and Syria this year?

[Rabinovich] I would put a question mark on this. Objectively speaking, given the progress that has been made in the negotiations and the gaps that have yet to be closed, it can be done. Whether the Syrians will put their hearts and minds to it and will do what that requires remains an open question.

[Segal] Would an agreement between Israel and Syria include Lebanon, or is there a chance of a separate deal with Lebanon prior to an accord with the Syrians?

[Rabinovich] Prior or not, an agreement with Lebanon will have to be done separately. Lebanon is under heavy Syrian influence, but remains a sovereign country. An agreement will have to be negotiated with Lebanon, but it can only be negotiated with Lebanon when the Syrians allow the Lebanese to move forward. Once they do that, it could be a matter of months.

[Linde] And have the Syrians given you any indication that they can rein in Hizballah, for example, against the wishes of Iran?

[Rabinovich] I think they have given everybody an indication that they can because they have been very instrumental in working out the present limitations on Hizballah's activity. I think they can do more but, clearly, they are holding some of their ability to do that for the event of a large agreement with us.

[Linde] One final question, Ambassador Rabinovich. Are you feeling optimistic about the chances of peace with Syria and Lebanon?

[Rabinovich] Let us say that I am feeling more optimistic this week than I did four weeks ago, and I think we can have a more realistic feeling in about a week from now, after the secretary goes through at least the first half of his mission in the region.

Syria Said Pursuing 'Tactical' Peace

TA0603104195 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 6 Mar 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Syria's waiting game"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The good news about Syria's apparent reluctance to advance the peace talks is that Damascus is obviously not preparing for war in the near future. This is so not because the intelligence community says that the likelihood of all-out war is "low"—intelligence assessments have been wrong before. Nor is it because dictator Hafiz al-Asad has made "a strategic decision for peace," as the current conventional wisdom would have it. Decisions by absolute rulers are eminently reversible.

What indicates diminished interest in war at this point is, paradoxically, al-Asad's lack of enthusiasm for signing a peace agreement with Israel in exchange for the Golan Heights. Acquiring the Golan would give Syria an immediate strategic advantage, which al-Asad should want if war is on his mind. But it may force him to forfeit at least some of the hold he has over Lebanon and forego the vast economic benefits such a hold entails.

Until the recent US congressional elections, al-Asad may have believed that better relations with Washington and the removal of Syria from the list of terrorism-sponsoring and drug-dealing states would more than compensate for the likely losses of the multi-billion dollar revenue Syria gets from Lebanon. Syria had hoped for American grants, investments, loans and a most-favored-nation status. But the transformation of Congress into a bastion of conservatism and neo-isolationism has made such prospects slim. A

Republican Congress which may contemplate the reduction of aid to Israel is not about to give taxpayers' dollars to a radical dictator.

Al-Asad is obviously uncomfortable with a "comprehensive peace" which may question his continued presence in Lebanon. He would rather see Syrian entrenchment in Lebanon continue undisturbed, even if it means a postponement in regaining the Golan.

The longer the Syrians stay—in violation of the al-Ta'if agreement but with nary a word of protest from the major powers—the more the world will get used to the idea of Syrian domination in Lebanon. And the more rooted this international acceptance, the more unlikely the demands on Syria to relinquish its rule.

The bad news in all this is that al-Asad, who once said that the destruction of Israel is a historical imperative even if takes 200 years, is still thinking in expansionist terms. He has not abandoned the dream of Greater Syria, nor the goal of reaching strategic parity with Israel. The pace of Syrian arming has not slackened, and Syrian power is already superior to Israel's in various departments. It has a standing army of 400,000 plus 150,000 in reserves and, according to foreign reports, substantially more armor and missiles than the IDF [Israel Defense Forces].

That is why al-Asad may be unimpressed by the opportunity presented by the super-dovish, concession-prone Rabin government. Not unreasonably, he believes that as long as the world supports Israel's withdrawal from the Golan, the Heights will be Syria's sooner or later regardless of who rules in Israel. Free from internal pressures to make peace, he can make outlandish demands ("more than Egypt ever did," as the chief of army intelligence put it to the cabinet yesterday), in the expectation that Israel, pressed to reach an agreement by a public tired of war and casualties, will cross even the most hallowed red lines.

What is far more significant in the long run for Syria is the development of nuclear weapons by Iran, and the growth and improvement of chemical and biological capabilities and conventional arms by all the major Arab powers.

If there is something to be learned from Syria's stubborn refusal to soften its terms it is not that al-Asad is a tough negotiator who wants peace, but that the agreement he is willing to reach with Israel is tactical, not strategic. Like Yasir 'Arafat, who repeatedly reminds his listeners that the Oslo agreement resembles the temporary pact the prophet Muhammad made with the Quraysh tribe—a pact he broke when he became stronger—al-Asad does not think in term of real peace. He will agree only to a treaty guaranteed to make him stronger and Israel weaker; an agreement that will perpetuate his rule in Lebanon and enable him to continue preparing Syria for war.

The very fact that the talks have reached a stalemate is an indication that even the Rabin government is unable to yield to the Syrian dictator's demands. Having rationalized his willingness to abandon the Golan by insisting on "adequate" security arrangements, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin may find it difficult now to agree to less. For al-Asad, this is reason enough to consider the talks a waste of time.

Rabin Eases Closure, Promises More Entry Permits

TA0303193795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Yitzhaq Rabin, prime minister and defense minister, this evening decided to further ease the measures of closure imposed on the residents of the territories.

Next week 3,000 additional entry permits will be issued: 2,000 to industry and services workers, and 1,000 to agriculture workers from Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. The permits will be given to married men over the age of 30 who had worked in Israel before the closure. Permits will also be given to 500 workers in the tourist industry who are over the age of 25, allowing them to work in Jerusalem only. Special permits will also be given to 750 students from the Gaza Strip who study at Judaea and Samaria colleges. This was reported by our correspondent Dani Zaqen.

Peres Calls For PLO Security Measures

AU0403205395 Vienna DIE PRESSE in German 4-5 Mar 95 p 3

[Interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by Andreas Schwarz; place and date not given: "One cannot build the second floor before the first floor"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Schwarz] Mr. Minister, after three years the Middle East peace process has more or less come to a standstill. Has fundamentalist terror finally achieved its goal?

[Peres] No. We have to learn from what has taken us to the brink of revolution, and before we continue we do not want to make the same mistakes. However, we also expect the other side to fulfill its part of the agreement. We are living through great changes in the Middle East, and irritations are part of that. After the wedding night there comes life in the family, and this is something different—the honeymoon is over.

[Schwarz] However, since the patience of the people in Israel and among the Palestinians is coming to an end, does one not need fast and substantive steps by both sides?

[Peres] Not everything is always our fault. It is the business of the Palestinians to take measures for more security. One cannot say: They are hesitating but we have to go ahead. Why should we? Or the Americans and

Europeans—both have promised to improve the economic situation of the Palestinians. However, there is not really much coming. I cannot say that everyone is playing his role.

[Schwarz] Former Foreign Minister Abba Eban recently said in THE JERUSALEM POST that the ball is now in Israel's court for restarting the peace process....

[Peres] Allegedly, the ball is always in our court, and we are trying to make the best of it. I do not believe that a delay of a few months is so important. However, once again, we tell the Palestinians quite clearly: Take visible measures for security.

[Schwarz] Prime Minister Rabin said that, in the long run, there will be a "separation of Israel and the Palestinian entity." Does this mean an end for the Jewish settlements in the occupied or autonomous Palestinian territories?

[Peres] We are talking about a separation in the political sense and cooperation in the economic sense—but this does not mean a physical separation. What you mean is: We must not have any settlements anymore, and we must create work in the territories so that the Arab workers need not come to us anymore. However, this will be a very long economic development and a lot of work, for Jordan, for the Palestinians, and for us.

The problem of the Jewish settlements is a problem of relations and not of borders. There are 1.2 million Arabs and 130,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank, and if relations are okay there are no problems; what kind of problems should there be? In Israel, too, we have Jewish and Arab people and there are no problems.

[Schwarz] Is it realistic to talk about a withdrawal of the Israeli troops from the West Bank as long as there are settlements there and thus a need for security?

[Peres] No, this is not set down in the agreements with the Palestinians, either. "Regrouping" does not mean "withdrawal." A change in the presence is planned and not an end to it. And then the Palestinians must prove that they have their own people under control.

[Schwarz] Nevertheless, is real peace possible at all as long as there are Jewish settlements in the territories?

[Peres] Yes, why not? If the relations are okay. Look at Haifa or Tel Aviv or at other places. There coexistence works. Why? Because the future is secure. In other places, however, people are fighting for the future.

[Schwarz] Recently the Knesset did not stop the expansion of settlements around Jerusalem, despite expectations to the contrary. Does this not lead to further distrust?

[Peres] All this is always completely mixed. There are many satellites around Jerusalem. There is private land, there are private villages. No one wants an expansion of the settlements there. However, under the former government 15,000 permits for building houses were issued. We have examined these plans and have found out that 8,000 are still on paper and 7,000 are already being built. We have stopped those on paper, but we have neither a logical nor a legal reason to stop those already under construction. If someone legally owns land and legally builds a house, how should we stop him? We are not stopping the construction of Arab houses and Arab villages, either.

[Schwarz] The main problems of this peace process are still ahead, such as the question of Jerusalem. Can there ever be a compromise at all between Israel's position (Jerusalem is the undivided capital) and the Palestinian claim to Eastern Jerusalem as their capital?

[Peres] Jerusalem's political situation is out of the question. We can discuss the city's religious concerns but not its political situation. We will not change it, and there is no reason to cut Jerusalem into two parts. Jerusalem has never been the capital of Arab life.

Let us not forget: There has never been a Palestinian state, never a Palestinian capital; Gaza has never been under Palestinian administration, the education of Palestinian children has never been in Palestinian hands. One must simply recognize what we have done: We have supported the Palestinians economically and politically while terrorism continued, and we still returned land and administration to them.

[Schwarz] Jerusalem remains undivided in any case?

[Peres] Yes.

[Schwarz] Recently the PLO suggested EU mediation in the stalemated Middle East process.

[Peres] We do not object if someone intervenes in the Middle East process. However, what is really necessary is an improvement of the economic situation. Gaza, Jericho, and the West Bank—we need help there, this is indispensable for peace. The United States and Europe must seriously think about whether they would not combat fundamentalism with more intensive aid. They have the choice: There are 200 million Arabs; they can either become terrorists and fundamentalists or consumers and partners. Advice and mediation alone does not achieve anything.

[Schwarz] The PLO has turned to the United Nations because of the settlements.

[Peres] This is a bit ridiculous. We, too, could turn to the United Nations, for instance because the PLO has promised to suspend the PLO Charter, which has not been done. One can always complain and complain, but the Palestinians are cheating their own people. "What is happening for us?" they ask; their own followers are demoralized even though, as I said, great changes have taken place.

[Schwarz] The issue of Syria is completely unsolved, whose state of war against Israel provides moral support to the radicals and thus probably is a key to the entire Middle East peace. Is there a new proposal to restart the talks with Damascus?

[Peres] The Middle East process has many doors and many keys. Of course, without Syria it is not complete, and we would like to come to an arrangement with Damascus. However, Syria's behavior is difficult to understand. Normally, when you come to negotiations, you come with your proposals; but you do not force the other party right from the start to take over your own ideas. I do not see how I can mobilize a majority in Israel if we do not negotiate but just announce their (Syria's) position.

[Schwarz] Are there conditions under which Israel would be willing to withdraw completely from the Golan?

[Peres] We do not have any conditions apart from negotiating without conditions. But there are four points that are directly linked with each other....

[Schwarz] Which ones?

[Peres] First, the kind of peace; second, the security arrangements; third, the withdrawal; and fourth, the time frame. One thing influences the other. If there is a good solution for peace and security, I will perhaps be able to come to a good solution for the withdrawal. This is linked.

[Schwarz] Thus, there could be a complete withdrawal?

[Peres] I will say that in the negotiations, why should I say it before?

[Schwarz] Any Middle East peace without including Iran will be uncertain for Israel in the end. Do you, as someone who has always believed in dialogue and efforts for peace, have a vision of how Tehran could be included?

[Peres] The problem is not Iran itself, the problem is the fundamentalist movement. This fundamentalism is more dangerous than communism. They are claiming the right to cheat, to lie, to kill, they have no respect for human life, they are trying to get nuclear weapons—this is a lethal mixture.

There is only one guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons: democracy. Never in history has one democracy attacked another one. However, Iran is a highly tyrannical regime under the name of the clergy and of holiness.

However, all this is not only a problem for Israel but also for the Arabs. In any case, the West should take great care not to support Iran economically.

[Schwarz] This leads to the question of the nuclear threat and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], which Israel does not want to sign. This is the reason why Egypt threatens to leave the NPT.

[Peres] Iran's behavior justifies Israel's efforts for deterrence. We are not getting up and telling Iran: Look, you want to attack us; do not worry, we do not have anything to defend ourselves with, anyway.

We simply do not believe very much in the NPT. Iraq has signed it, so have Iran and North Korea—so what? The NPT would be something for honest members. And we are a bit surprised that Europe calls on us to talk with Iran about nuclear control. Iran is threatening Israel's existence. We are the only country in the world that is openly and daily threatened. And no one reacts.

We say: A safe Middle East is like a building composed of peace floors. The first floor is the end of all hostilities. The second floor means making the Middle East free of nuclear weapons. However, one cannot build the second floor before the first floor.

Rabbis' Attempt to Talk to Hamas Called Futile

TA0403203595 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 4 Mar 95

[Aharon Barne'a video report—recorded; italicized passages in Arabic, processed from the Hebrew subtitles; speakers identified by screen caption]

[FBIS Translated Text] Senior defense officials have recently estimated that Islamic terrorism inside Israel will intensify, regardless of progress or obstacles in the peace process. It is hard to accept the incompetence such estimates present, and often it seems that a solution must be found and all that is needed is a better search. This, apparently, was the reason for the initiative that recently came out of the settlement of Teqoa', of all places. Local Rabbi Fruman met with senior Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members and offered a dialogue between the Muslim clergy and the Israeli chief rabbis in an attempt to reach what the Muslim tradition calls hudna—a temporary cease-fire. The chief rabbis accepted the initiative, but once again it became apparent that the Hamas leaders are tough negotiating partners. Aharon Barne'a filed this report:

[Begin recording] [Barne'a] The Jewish settlements beyond the Green Line are, perhaps, the most serious point of daily friction between Israelis and Palestinians. The animosity to the Jews who chose to build their homes in the middle of dense Palestinian population centers seems to have become an axiom questioned by almost no one. And yet, from here, Teqoa' in the 'Etzyon Bloc, a call was recently made to find a new way, a new channel of communication with the Arab neighbors.

It seems that we keep having these vague feelings that a solution for the conflict, the violence, the terror must be found, and that all it takes is finding it. Last week we found a new attitude in Teqoa'. We found a search for a channel of communication that is not political, but totally different. This is an angle we have so far failed to seriously consider.

[Fruman] He who seeks peace in this land, not only in Oslo, must consider the circumstances here. In this land there are Arab and Jewish blocks of religious people. The seeker of peace in this land must realize that this land has hamsin [heat waves] as well as Hamas.

[Barne'a] Rabbi Fruman believes that through negotiations between the religious leaders of Jews and Muslims, a hudna—temporary cease-fire—can be attained with Hamas. This is a known and an acceptable concept of the Muslim tradition, used in arrangements between enemies. The search for this religious dialogue took Rabbi Fruman to Nabulus, among other places, where he met the man considered the No. 1 figure in the Hamas Movement in the West Bank. At the beginning of the conversation, it may seem that there may be things to talk about.

[Shaykh Hamid al-Baytawi] *When we feel that the things that happen are beneficial to us, we have no objection whatsoever to introducing a hudna, to sitting together and holding a dialogue with rabbis or other people. We do not oppose this at all.*

[Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, Hamas leader in Gaza] *We want to show the world that we are not what you make us look like. Therefore, if Israel is indeed interested in stopping this whirlpool of violence, the Muslim side is willing to enter a temporary cease-fire in order to restore the rights of the movement members.*

[Barne'a] Fruman suggested that, on the Israeli end, the dialogue be conducted by the chief rabbis. They did not rule out the idea, provided that the prime minister gives them a go-ahead.

Do you believe there is room for a better understanding between clergymen than between politicians?

[Israel's Chief Rabbi Yisra'el Lau] At this time the nature of the conflict is more religious than political; therefore, on the face of it, it would seem that the answer to your question is negative. And yet, if we say that we were created by one God and that we have a common father—especially since you praise yourselves as being the descendants of Ibrahim al-Khalil, the Prophet Abraham, the friend of God—then, after all, we are brothers on this issue.

[Barne'a] From his talks with al-Zahhar and others, Fruman understood that terror is a nightmare for Hamas; not the acts themselves, but the reaction to them which brings about measures restricting their moves and endangering their status.

[Fruman] They certainly are open to, primarily, speaking to men of faith, but they are also willing to let these conversations assume political significance—provided it helps them attain their goals, that is, to be part of the political map.

[Barne'a] But this certainty of the Teqoa' Rabbi appears to fail the test of the Gaza reality on the day of the first Id al-Fitr festival under the autonomous rule, the rule of the Palestinian Authority, which stops the traffic on the streets of Gaza when the leader goes around making holiday calls. Speaking to Hamas men in Gaza, one finds that there really is not much that we can discuss.

[Al-Zahhar] *We regard the move to introduce rabbis into this game as a futile attempt that will not yield fruit. After all, Israel has managed to reach the PLO through its left-wing activists and now it is trying to reach Hamas through its rabbis. We are quite well aware of that experience, and will not repeat it.*

[Barne'a] Dr. al-Zahhar spent an entire year in the deportees' camp in Lebanon with this man. I met him at his home in the neighborhood of al-Shaykh Radwan. Between one holiday blessing and another, he says he will give no Jewish rabbi a thread of a chance.

[Shaykh Ahmad Bahr, Hamas leader] *If they want a dialogue, they must get out of my land and my Jerusalem and break up the settlements. Then, we could have a cease-fire or consider one. I was mistreated, the Palestinian nation was abused, our holy sites are being desecrated, the settlement campaign continues, and now they speak of the project of Greater Jerusalem. How can a dialogue be held under such circumstances?*

[Al-Baytawi] *Today you are strong, but soon will come the day when you will be weak and we will be strong. We are a noble nation of more than 1 billion people. Therefore, if you do not improve your attitude to the Muslims, your end will be a bitter one.*

[Barne'a] Rabbi Fruman perhaps did not hear this threat that comes from Nabulus as well as from Gaza. Perhaps he does understand it, which is why he is trying. In any event, the solution that he had found in his books is not to be found in the books of the other side. [end recording]

Iraqis Caught Near Jordanian Border

TA0303175695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Three Iraqi refugees were captured last night near Hamat Gader and taken in for interrogation. They are apparently seeking asylum in Israel. Several dozen Iraqi refugees are being held in Israeli jails, and they demand to be released in Israel or allowed to move to another country.

Iraqi Asylum Seekers Deported

JN0503114195 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel today deported three Iraqis to Jordan. The three Iraqis had infiltrated into Israel on Thursday [3 March] and sought political asylum, according to an Israeli military source.

Intelligence Sources Say Likelihood of War 'Low'

TA0503132895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] After hearing the annual briefing from representatives of all the intelligence services, a number of cabinet ministers said that although Syria wanted peace it was demanding more than Egypt had at the time. Israel was unprepared to accept these conditions, the ministers asserted.

Our correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that in the course of the briefing it was disclosed that Iran could achieve nuclear capability within three years, unless it managed to obtain ready-made nuclear weapons at an even earlier date.

The ministers were told that the Arab countries feared Israel's economic clout and did not believe they were strong enough economically to compete with Israel in the arms race.

The intelligence officials expressed the assessment that the political process was irreversible and that the likelihood of war was extremely low.

The cabinet met today for six hours in order to hear the annual briefing from the representatives of all the intelligence services.

Intelligence Sees Egypt as 'Adversary'

TA0603105695 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 6 Mar 95 p A1

[Report by political correspondent Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "In 1995 Egypt is increasingly appearing to be Israel's adversary," senior intelligence elements yesterday told the cabinet, whose weekly meeting dealt with the intelligence community's annual situation analysis. The elements said that Egypt, which is struggling to maintain leadership in the Arab world, fears Israel's penetration into and growing impact on the region and that that explains its rigid stance on the nuclear issue.

In view of the Egyptian stance, the intelligence officers believed that with time, the United States will find it difficult to explain why Israel is being accorded "a preferential status" in the nuclear context, why it is not required to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], as are other countries. Brigadier General Ya'aqov 'Amidror, chief of the Intelligence Branch's Research Division, said Egypt is constantly upgrading its army at considerable cost, despite its dire economic state.

'Amidror did not discuss the motives for Egypt's military procurement, explaining: "It is our job to analyze the potential, not the intentions." A report from the Israeli Embassy in Washington, which was received yesterday at the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, says that during his upcoming visit to the region, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will try to find out whether the Egyptian-Israeli differences on the nuclear issue can be bridged.

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres said yesterday that Israel will definitely not sign the NPT. "We are giving up territory, we are giving up control, and we are fighting terror, but we are not prepared to give up Israel's deterrent power. Had that been a problem with Egypt only, we would have solved it, but why should we say to the Iranians: Okay, we have no deterrence?" [passage omitted]

[A related report by Aluf Ben on page A3 of the same newspaper adds: "Referring to the superpowers' stand on the Middle East, Gen. 'Amidror said 'the United States is becoming introverted.' The ministers were told that in addition to promoting an isolationist policy, the Republican Congress would like to prevent President Bill Clinton from scoring foreign policy triumphs prior to the elections. The intelligence officers said that while they had estimated last year that Russia planned to regain its place in the international and regional arena, the same cannot be said today. Referring to Iraq, they said that its main goal today is 'to commute the life sentence it had been meted.' The Iraqis would like to have a year during which their conduct would be tested."]

King Husayn Discharged From Hospital 4 Mar

JN0403113695 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty King Husayn, accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Nur, was discharged today from the al-Husayn Medical City in good health, thanks be to God, after undergoing minor surgery to remove an inferior nasal cyst, which caused recurrent infections in the middle ear. [passage omitted]

Further on 'Minor Surgery'

JN0603090795 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 6 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—His Majesty King Husayn is in good health following a minor surgery at King Husayn Medical Centre, Major General Yusuf Qusus, the director of the Royal Medical Services, said Sunday.

Dr. Qusus told the JORDAN TIMES that the King underwent a simple procedure at King Husayn Medical Centre where a naso-pharyngeal cyst was resected endoscopically by Professor Heinz Stammberger of Austria on Friday.

The cyst used to cause recurrent infection of the middle ear and its removal will prevent the recurrence of infection, Dr. Qusus said.

In two months time the King may undergo another minor surgery for the repair of the drum of the right ear, Dr. Qusus said.

"The endoscopic procedure was completed very successfully and His Majesty's condition is excellent," he added.

In a statement to Radio Jordan after the surgery King Husayn said that the trouble in the middle ear resulted from flying planes and his constant exercises with the Jordanian Armed Forces.

During his stay in hospital, the King and Her Majesty Queen Nur toured the hospital's wards and talked to patients, wishing them speedy recovery.

Upon leaving the hospital the King was met by a huge crowd of well wishers. Later during the day King Husayn and Queen Nur received at Al-Nadwa Palace Prof. Stammberger and his two assistants.

King Husayn presented the Graz, Austria-based professor with the Jordanian independence Medal of the First Order and gifts to his assistants in recognition of their services. Chief of the Royal Court Marwan al-Qasim attended the audience.

King, 'Arafat Discuss Peace, Difficulties

JN0503220395 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received a telephone call this evening from His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian National Authority, in which President 'Arafat congratulated his majesty on his safety and the success of surgery he underwent last Friday.

King Husayn and President 'Arafat discussed a number of issues of joint interest, as well as the latest developments in the peace process and ways to overcome the challenges and difficulties facing it.

U.S. Response to EU Talks Proposal Viewed

JN0603102795 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 6 Mar 95 p 1

[Article by Ayman al-Safadi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The United States has not yet responded to specific proposals Europe has made for a joint European-American action to save the staggering Middle East peace process, a Western diplomatic source has said.

While another source expected the U.S. to "ignore" the proposal which the European Union (EU) sent to the U.S. after the visit of the EU Troika delegation to the region last month, the European diplomatic source said he would not share the "pessimism," saying that the U.S. and Europe have an interest in seeing the peace talks succeed.

No information was available on the actual proposals Europe has made through a letter sent by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe to his U.S. counterpart Warren Christopher. But the diplomatic source said it involves a joint European-U.S. action to save the troubled peace talks.

The source said the EU wanted to secure a more active role in the peace process because it has a real interest in its success and not because it wants to complete with the U.S.

"There should be no competition between the U.S. and Europe because the objective is the same," the source said.

The source said Mr. Juppe had invited Mr. Christopher to Paris after the latter's Middle Eastern tour, which starts Wednesday, to initiate contact over the proposals but Mr. Christopher's schedule would not allow him to make the trip.

Europe is an active player in the multilateral track of the negotiations but it has been denied any real role in the bilateral talks.

European officials have repeatedly expressed discontent about these arrangements, noting that they are the major financier of the peace process while most of the credit is going to the U.S.

"The EU proposal is a last chance effort to save the peace talks" which are deadlocked on the Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian tracks, said the source.

"We have a real interest to contribute (to the success of the) process and take political risks for that," the European source said.

The source said that Europe's bid to play a more active role in the peace process is motivated by the strategic interests the EU has in seeing the process succeed.

European officials have said that their interests in the region differ from those of the U.S. due to the geographic proximity of Europe to the area and the reverberations that any conflict in the region would have within its borders.

To stress these interests, Europe is preparing for a Mediterranean conference in Barcelona towards the end of the year where it would discuss a strategy for cooperation between countries of the region.

The strategy is likely to entail a six billion European Currency Units economic programme for the southern countries of the Mediterranean which the EU views as central to its own stability and economic prosperity.

Attending the conference will be 11 countries in the Mediterranean region which have signed agreements with the EU.

U.S. Urged To Accept Proposal

JN0603110895 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 6 Mar 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Europe on the Scale"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In what European diplomatic sources call a last chance effort to save the staggering peace process, the European Union has proposed a plan that would entail joint European-American action to help end the deadlock on many tracks of the peace talks and carry the process to fruition. The U.S. has not yet responded to the proposal, but many observers doubt that Washington would allow the Europeans to play a bigger role in the bilateral talks.

Washington would be wrong to shun the new European initiative, which was made after the visit of the EU troika delegation to the region last month. True, the U.S. would not pay any immediate price for keeping the European Union at bay from the process, especially the bilateral tracks. But one of the major partners will, namely the Arabs. And that is why the Arab world should start to put some pressure on Washington to accept the EU proposal. It goes without saying that the U.S. or any other parties would eventually have to pay a price if the Arabs lose out in this game.

That the Europeans have a vested interest in bringing stability to the region is not in doubt. Nor can it be clearer that Europe has done much to demonstrate its real interest in peace through its economic and political contribution to the peace talks. In any and all cases, the EU can play a major role in helping push forward the peace process and Washington has to accept this fact. Keeping the Europeans from the peace effort is an action that cannot be justified. Israeli claims that Europe will be biased towards the Arabs are as false now as they were before the launching of the peace talks in Madrid in 1991. The Arabs have accepted a U.S. role in the talks despite their belief Washington would favour Israel because they recognised the ability of Washington to help the talks move forward. The Israelis should do the same as far as Europe is concerned, especially [since] their claims about European favouritism towards the Arabs lack any solid proof.

Europe maintains—and rightly so—that it can help the peace process. Moreover, the Europeans say the success of the negotiations would fulfill a strategic interest for them, and they are willing therefore to take political risks to achieve it. That makes a lot of sense considering the nature of the interests the EU has in the region. Along with its participation in the process, Europe will bring diplomatic skills and funds to salvage the peace negotiations. These are two assets that the talks, and the region, need. The U.S. should not preempt a European role because it wants to maintain exclusivity in sponsoring the peace talks. After all, the declared objective of the U.S.' involvement in the peace talks is to bring stability to the region and end years of conflict. If others believe they can help it in this endeavour, they should be given a chance. The U.S. should realise that, and the Arabs must make sure that it does.

U.S. Decision on Canceled Debt Criticized

JN0603104695 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 6 Mar 95 pp 1, 25

[Editorial: "Peace cannot be sold for money"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. House of Representatives' decision to reduce the amount of Jordanian debts scheduled to be written off this year received the reaction it deserves—frustration mixed with some astonishment. This is especially true since the decision has no justification, if not to say that it is actually harmful to U.S. interests in the region and to the peace process sponsored by the United States.

The negative impact of this decision was eased only by the pledge of U.S. President Bill Clinton to Jordan to gradually write off the debts, especially since the reiteration of this commitment came immediately after the U.S. House of Representatives made this illogical decision and, above all, since it was announced publicly and in a clear manner.

We really do not know what party could possibly be served by such an isolationist policy from within the U.S. Congress with its new Republican majority.

We also do not understand the objectives behind this decision toward Jordan in particular, considering that it is one of the smallest recipients of U.S. aid in the Middle East—aid that continues to generously flow to neighboring countries.

All this, however, should not hide the basic fact that when Jordan sought to achieve peace and reached a peace treaty with Israel, it was not trying to get money from here or there or to exchange its stand for money. Moreover, it was not waiting for favors from this or that sponsoring country.

Jordan, whose people were disturbed by the stand adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives, will continue its full commitment toward peace as well as its consecrated belief in the right of the people in this region to close the chapter of conflict, tension, and wars whether the United States decides to write off Jordan's debts or decides to keep them without any reductions.

Mideast Bank, U.S. Cancellation of Debts Viewed

JN0603120595 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 6 Mar 95 p 10

[Report by Nasir 'Arif]

[FBIS Translated Text] Meetings dealing with the establishment of a Middle East development bank are scheduled to open in Washington on Thursday [9 March] with the participation of more than 20 Arab and foreign countries. These meetings come from implementing recommendations by the economic summit held in Casablanca last October.

Dr. Jawad al-'Anani, head of the Jordanian side, said that participants in these meetings will discuss the bylaws of a Middle East development bank, sources of funding, purposes for extending loans, shareholders' equity, and the method of managing the bank over a period of two days. The establishment of this bank will be officially announced during the economic summit to be held in Amman at the end of this year.

In an exclusive statement to AL-ASWAQ before the departure of the Jordanian delegation—which includes Dr. Nabil 'Ammari, secretary general of the Ministry of Planning; Dr. Umayyah Tuqan, official spokesman for the Amman economic summit; and Dr. Fayiz al-Tarawinah, Jordanian ambassador in Washington—al-'Anani said that the agenda of the meetings also includes discussing mechanisms to finance infrastructure projects, means to develop the private sector, and political and economic reforms in the Middle East region.

Proposals to establish a development bank in the Middle East came from parties to the peace process. The Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles signed in September 1993 called for establishing such a bank. Jordan and Egypt joined this call during the four-way meetings held in Cairo at the end of last year.

On another level, Dr. Jawad al-'Anani commented on a decision by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. Congress to write off only $50 million of Jordan's debts. He said that this is an initial step and cannot be relied on to see the extent of the U.S. Administration's seriousness toward writing off Jordan's debts. He added: The agreement on writing off these debts stipulates that these debts will be canceled over a period of three years between 1995 and 1997. Therefore, the decision by the Foreign Affairs Committee in the U.S. Congress must be presented to the main committee and then to the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate.

Prime Minister Returns From Visit to Turkey

JN0503220695 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir returned to Amman this evening at the end of a three-day private visit to Turkey.

His excellency was received by 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah, deputy prime minister and minister of education; Dr. Khalid al-Karaki, deputy prime minister and minister of information, and Ibrahim 'Izz-al-Din, minister of state for cabinet affairs.

Buwayz Leaves for Brussels, Comments on Issues

NC0403134395 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz left Beirut for Brussels at noon today. Buwayz made a statement at Beirut Airport to correspondents. Our correspondent Darwish 'Ammar reports:

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] Your Excellency, you are leaving for Brussels today to participate in the Lebanese-European Council meetings. Can you brief us on the issues you will broach at this meeting?

[Buwayz] The importance of the meeting lies in the fact that it is devoted to Lebanon. The meeting will enable me to meet with 15 European foreign ministers and discuss political, economic, and cultural issues and future relations between Lebanon and the European group so that the relations may be consolidated and stabilized within the framework of a permanent mechanism and provisions. On the political level, we will review the situation in the Middle East and in south Lebanon, particularly the Israeli naval blockade imposed along the south coast. We will request that these countries intercede to lift this blockade, to end the Israeli acts of aggression, and to implement Security Council Resolution 425. I must note here the firm and candid European stance on Resolution 425. On the economic level, the Lebanese delegation includes economic experts and representatives of the economic establishments. We will review the economic situation, particularly the infrastructure and the projects that the Lebanese Government intends to establish in the years to come and to seek cooperation with the European countries to support these projects. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Your Excellency, U.S. Secretary of States Warren Christopher will arrive in the region on Wednesday. What results can Lebanon and the region expect from this visit? Have you received through diplomatic channels any information on certain proposals Secretary Christopher may bring as part of this new tour?

[Buwayz] Clearly, after the period of stalemate that characterized the peace negotiations, the U.S. Administration is seeking to stimulate this file, especially in view of the evidence that separate peace will never be a stable one. This is manifest in the Gaza and Jericho agreement. I believe that Secretary Christopher will try to present new proposals to stimulate this file. The reason for this stalemate in the talks is the Israeli hesitaition and the lack of an Israeli political decision on peace.

[Correspondent] Israeli Foreign Minister Peres said that there is no blockade on the Lebanese south coast and that the Israeli gunboats search some ships because they bring weapons. What is your answer to this statement?

[Buwayz] Naturally, we do not doubt the Israelis' ability and expertise in manipulating international media. This capability, which the Israelis used on various occasions to distort facts, has appeared several times. I want to ask how we can describe the incidents taking place in the south. This is not a a linguistic issue. I want to ask when Israeli gunboats prevent the Lebanese fishing boats from sailing to the high seas along the south coast, and when they open fire at these boats, and when they threaten the fishermen who seek to sail to the high seas to fish what we can call these actions. I believe beyond a shadow of doubt that Israel is trying to impose a blockade on the south coast to preempt Secretary Christopher's visit and to let some steam out of the tension of the Israeli Government situation and that in Gaza and Jericho. Simply speaking, Israel is trying to put pressure on Lebanon to throw out the card of resistance before the peace negotiations are resumed.

[Correspondent] [Queston indistinct]

[Buwayz] We have launched a diplomatic campaign. The Foreign Ministry will continue this campaign. While I am away, the Foreign Ministry secretary general will contact the Security Council, the UN General Secretariat, the Arab League General Secretariat, and the Security Council permanent member states and other member states as well as the European and Arab groups that we have met at the Foreign Ministry. We hope that the world that constantly encourages us and gives us advice on the need to make progress in the peace process will realize that this Israeli subversion of the process originates in Israel and that it is high time Israel felt that there is international supervision of its excesses.

[Correspondent] Do you believe that the U.S. and European silence about the current Israeli pressure exerted through the naval blockade comes as part of influencing the Lebanese stance on the peace process in the region?

[Buwayz] I think that it is a question of inability rather than negative intentions. [end recording]

Buwayz Receives Message of Support From Arab League

NC0603073595 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz received a message from Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid yesterday. In his message, 'Abd-al-Majid stated the League's total support for a full implementation of the Security Council resolutions is the right approach to ending aggression and Lebanon's restoration of sovereignty over all its territories so that it can contribute to advancing the peace process. 'Abd-al-Majid affirmed that the League is continuing its efforts through its Arab and world contacts to end the unjust Israeli naval blockade and iniquitous aggression against Lebanon.

Minister: U.S. 'Cheated' on Security Request

NC0403112295 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Health Minister Marwan Hamadah has said that he is staying in the cabinet because he is convinced that there is no alternative to the current status quo, noting that it is naturally possible to make certain occasional changes in ministerial portfolios. He expressed his belief that the government should be reshuffled but that Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri should retain his post as head of a new government. [passage omitted]

In an interview with the Voice of Lebanon broadcast within the Saturday Saloon program today, Hamadah said that the events around us affirm that a peaceful solution has delayed or stumbled, noting that if U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher failes during his forthcoming tour to break through the Israeli wall, the issue will be postponed until 1997, because in 1996 the Knesset elections will be held in Israel and the presidential elections will be held in the United States.

Hamadah pointed out that Washington cheated Lebanon when it requested it to dispatch a security delegation to discuss security matters, because the issue they wanted to discuss was political and not security. He stressed that Lebanon refuses to risk its basic stance.

Regarding the issue of toxic waste, Hamadah noted that this issue has been politicized and that there are attempts to dilute it and cover it up so that no one might know who brought the toxic waste to Lebanon or their whereabouts. He urged Judge Sa'id Mirza, the judicial magistrate in the case, to withdraw. [passage omitted]

Hizballah: Christopher's Visit Will Not Succeed

NC0503113995 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0645 GMT 5 Mar 95

["A Pause with an Event" program: "A Preview of Christopher's Upcoming Visit"]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. The region is experiencing a political stalemate. This, however, will not last long, as the region will receive U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher soon. U.S. Administration sources say that Christopher's trip comes in the wake of the conviction by the parties concerned with a settlement in the Middle East that the settlement process has stumbled, particularly on the Syrian track. Therefore, they aver, it needs a public step to emphasize that the process has not reached a deadlock, on the one hand, and that Washington is still committed to advancing it, on the other. These sources expect that Christopher's visit will last five to seven days and will take him to Syria, occupied Palestine, Egypt, and perhaps other countries.

It is not clear whether Christopher will bring fresh proposals or ideas to break the deadlock on the Syrian track. What do political circles expect from this tour? Political and diplomatic circles believe that Christopher's tour may end as his numerous previous trips ended, that is, without achieving the desired breakthrough. Other circles maintain that this trip may be a public attempt or gesture by Washington reflecting its desire to stimulate the settlement process but without having momentum or the required proposals to stimulate it in a fundamental way, particularly on the Syrian track. However, U.S. sources note that Christopher's priorities during this tour are to attempt to activate the Syrian track, help the Palestinians and Israelis to make some progress in their stumbling talks, and review Egypt's stance on the extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

What about the situation in the Zionist entity? Since the announcement was made that the U.S. Secretary of State will visit the region, Zionist leaders have adopted a new escalatory stance toward Syria. They believe that no peace agreement can be reached with Syria in 1995 if the process continues its slow progress. At the same time, they cast doubt on Damascus' public commitment to peace. In a stance reflecting Zionist annoyance with Syria's insistence on clinging to its position on a settlement, Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin said that in recent years Israel has accepted the idea that Syria has made a strategic decision to establish peace and that the only remaining question was the time to sign a peace agreement. What counts out of all of Christopher's tour is the Damascus visit, because everything that happens in other regional countries are minor matters now that so many have fallen into the trap.

Most analyses speculating on a settlement in the spring of this year revolve around the Syrian track, as all the other parties are in hurry. However, a settlement on the Syrian front is only possible in two cases:

First, if the Syrian fateful will is broken and the U.S. pressure in favor of the usurper entity succeeds. The U.S. bet hinges on the domestic situation in Egypt and Saudi Arabia on the one hand and on the weaker Lebanese link on the confrontation front. As Syria clings to its pan-Arab constants and exerts efforts in Lebanon and in the Arab world to seize Arab rights, the situation in Lebanon is shaky and is fraught with enormous dangers that we must warn of. The U.S. moves in the past few months, particularly the visit to the region by U.S. envoy Perry and his statements; the continuing U.S. military support for the Zionist entity, represented in the recent supply of 48 F-16 aircraft; the continued pressure on the Egyptian and Saudi regimes; and playing with the Lebanese card and the pressure to form a joint Lebanese-U.S. committee were designed to undermine Syria and isolate it on the Arab and international levels. These attempts were followed by the Alexandria summit, which Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad called for to demonstrate the strong Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi solidarity. After this summit, it became apparent that all attempts to break Syria's will had failed. The U.S. attempts did not stop. A summit was held in Cairo and was attended by President Husni Mubarak, Palestinian self-government Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, the king of Jordan, and the Zionist enemy Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. This summit was considered to be a response to the Alexandria summit and an attempt to empty it of its political substance.

The second condition for achieving a political settlement this year is if the Zionist enemy government softens its intransigence and accepts the Syrian-Egyptian view of a settlement on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. This possibility requires a U.S. pressure that the current U.S. Administration is not using. It also requires a domestic Israeli situation supportive of a settlement. However, this situation is ruled out at present and needs time for Israel to accept peace in return for land. This, after all, is the basis of the Madrid conference. Thus, a change in the stalemate will await the next U.S. presidential elections and the Knesset elections in the Zionist entity, a limited war, or military operations against Syria and Lebanon.

At any rate, freezing the efforts for a settlement and exacerbation of the conflict in the region are looming on the horizon this year. This situation will continue until after the end of 1996. There are possibilities of a settlement early in 1997 or in the spring of that year. We, however, do not rule out the possibility of signing an agreement under certain circumstances and conditions. The possibilities of postponing a settlement in the region are enhanced in view of the exacerbation of disputes in the world around us and the emergence of new situations. The U.S.- Russian conflict is resurfacing, particularly after the emergence of a new Russian tsarist trend to renew the dreams of the old communism. In addition, there are differences between the two countries on the European front. In the past year, Europe's ambitions to play a role greater than that the United States wants it to play, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, came to the fore. Certain political circles see similarities between the conflict in Algeria and the U.S.-French dispute. France and Germany adopted a new stance on Iraq and a new British stance on Lebanon emerged. The Europeans made a decision to lift the ban on the sale of arms to Syria. Egypt is paying more attention to Europe, represented in President Mubarak's repeated visits and in their joint support of Yasir 'Arafat and in efforts to enhance the French cultural role in Egypt. These factors suggest that Christopher's visit to the region will only reap failure. Since the Syrian track is what worries Washington, this track will not take off quickly, at least in the present stage, and the U.S. wish to deny the Arab rights will not succeed.

Paper Views Christopher Tour, Israeli 'Sieges'

NC0403090495 Beirut AL-ANWAR in Arabic 28 Feb 95 p 1

[Editorial by Rafiq Khuri: "The American and Israeli Sieges"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanon is the only party that does not need to wait for Secretary Warren Christopher's expected tour of the region to find out its share of this tour, even though it is not one of the stops. Everything has been prepared beforehand on paper and in reality, from renewing the ban on the travel of Americans to Lebanon to escalating the war in the south. If the least the other parties are expecting from Christopher's tour is offers of new American ideas that would move the settlement process forward, the most Lebanon is expecting is diplomatic efforts to return the situation in the south to what it was before the naval siege and the escalation.

The picture is no longer surrealistic, it is now very realistic. What the person who renews the U.S. air travel "siege" on Lebanon is expected to do is remove the Israeli naval siege. What is required of Lebanon, who has taken note of the fact that the common denominator between the two sieges is the armed presence of Hizballah in the south, is to do what it does not want or cannot do. In other words, Lebanon is expected to abandon its right to resist the occupation and cast off what the authorities call the resistance card. What the Lebanese are expected to do, among other things, is to rely on the authority's reading of the Israeli escalation to understand that part of the reading can be summarized in the fact that Rabin has an internal crisis and that he is reacting to the Likud siege imposed on his government by running away to besiege Lebanon.

It is only natural that there is no decision or option other than steadfastness and confrontation. However, steadfastness needs a great deal more effort than the meager relief the authorities are offering and the role of the Red Cross. Confrontation, on the other hand, has to realize what the authorities have not realized on the internal front, least of which is to make progress in finalizing national reconciliation, rectify the political imbalance, organize participation in decisionmaking, and move from the state of persons to the state of institutions in fact, not in speeches only. In addition, the stage of confrontation and steadfastness is not short and its requirements continue after the siege is lifted so long as the settlement war continues.

We believe that renewing the ban on travel after the experiment with the security dialogue between Lebanon and the United States is not a death sentence issued against the experiment, but an extension of the temporary prison sentence issued against Lebanon inside the labyrinth of the settlement process and its complications. Washington believes that the dialogue experiment it wants is a continuous process that has succeeded in principle; that is, Washington has discovered that Lebanon is capable of starting a security dialogue. Washington says it is happy about this, just as parents are happy when they see their child take its first steps in talking and walking and become capable of doing more and more. Beirut has rediscovered the depth of the American decision, which links the ban not only to the security and political situations, Hizballah's arms, and the complications of the settlement war, but also to the policy of the double confinement of Iraq and Iran.

The Israeli escalation in the south is not only an attempt to shy away from an internal crisis inasmuch as it seems to be a big move on a chess board. Israel, who during the negotiations behaves as though diplomatic initiative is in its hands by either showing rigidity or revealing flexibility depending on its tactics for escape from the just and comprehensive settlement, is now behaving as though the military initiative is also in its hands. It arms itself with its understanding with the United States and some Arabs over escalating the war against terrorism to move its war against the resistance to a new stage to change the rules of the game that were set by Christopher last year.

The important point is not only for Lebanon to know how to confront what is happening before Christopher's tour, but to know how to cope with what happens after.

Shaykh Assails U.S. Silence over Israeli 'Siege'

NC0303201595 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In his Friday sermon delivered from the pulpit of Imam al-Husayn Mosque in Burj al-Barajinah [in Beirut's Southern Suburb] today, Mufti Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir Qabalan, deputy chairman of the Higher Shiite Islamic Council, said that the Israeli blockade of the Lebanese coast will not change Lebanon's stance or crush the will of the people, who have chosen resistance in all its forms as the only way to achieve the honorable objective of liberating the land and restoring the rights, even if this costs them many sacrifices. He said the Lebanese people have an experience in this field which Israel knows very well. Israel's [1982] invasion failed to subdue Lebanon or to force it to accept its diktats. Lebanese rights are sacred and we will not bargain over them in war or in peace. All the Israeli attempts coupled with U.S. pressure will not enable Israel to achieve its objectives, will not realize the U.S. Administration's ambitions for it, and will not undermine the formula of close cooperation between the Lebanese and Syrian peoples. The choice to coordinate with Syria is not artificial or coincidental; it is a historical and geographical fact strengthened by shared fates and goals.

Therefore, we tell the U.S. Administration that its attempt to eradicate Arab rights might succeed in some cases and places but will not work in the long run because it is not based on just principles and human and moral balances but on usurpation and theft.

Mufti Qabalan added: For peace to be just and comprehensive, there must be good will and effective international activity that will force Israel to respect international consensus and implement the UN resolutions.

He asked: Is it permissible for the international community to apply double standards and is it logical for the United States to ostensibly defend human rights and carry the flag of freedom while helping its foster daughter Israel to subjugate peoples to the extent that the intransigent Israeli Nazism has affected the source of livelihood of fishermen in Lebanese ports? U.S. insolence has reached new heights when the United States neither denounces this siege nor intervenes to put an end to it.

He said: The U.S. stance has become known and its aims are obvious. The United States has absolute enmity for the Arab nation and conspires against its resources. Arab officials have so far not realized this fact and are still gambling everything on appeasing the United States. They have opened the doors wide in the face of the Israeli invasion.

We appeal to the officials of this country to stand on the side of their people and to give all their energy and resources to unifying the ranks. The only reply to Israeli aggression lies in clinging more and more to national unity and to promoting cohesion with sister Syria. We must not give in to the Israeli attempts and must not allow despair to control us and shake our confidence. Our faith in this homeland is strong. No believer should be afraid.

Mufti Qabalan called on international humanitarian organizations to free themselves from U.S. hegemony, to play their humanitarian role to the full, and to revitalize their efforts to restore their prestige and achieve the aims for which they have been established. He commended the role of the resistance fighters, urging them to strengthen their resolve against the enemies of themselves and the nation and opponents of justice.

Fadlallah Condemns U.S. Over Israeli Blockade

NC0403091595 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic GMT 0630 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ayatollah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has said that the Israeli naval blockade is an inhuman measure against the Lebanese fishermen and represents a political impasse to the Zionist enemy government. He said that the Rabin government is in an embarrassing situation before the opposition.

His eminence Fadlallah said that the United States, which shows understanding of the Israeli stance on the blockade, is not embarrassed by the bombardment of the oppressed villages in south Lebanon and the killing of civilians, because they are satisfied with the resistance of the Israeli occupation. He expressed his surprise at the U.S. request for the southerners to be patient with the Israeli practices, which enjoy total U.S. support and cover. He accused the United States of foiling and marginalizing Security Council Resolution 425 because it condemns Israel and demands its unconditional withdrawal from the south and western al-Biqa'.

Israeli Shelling Reported; Blockade Continues

NC0403063995 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At dawn today, the Israeli enemy forces located in al-Zaffatah pounded the outskirts of Yuhmur, al-Shaqif, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Mazra'at al-Hamra', and the Lebanese Army's deserted barracks in al-Nabatiyah with 82-mm mortar artillery. The bombardment was accompanied by 12.7-mm machine-gun fire at these areas. The Israeli forces fired flares over the outskirts of Arnun last night.

Israeli gunboats have continued their blockade of the southern coast for the 24th day in a row. Meanwhile, Israeli forces continue their acts of aggression against the peaceful villages in the south and western al-Biqa'. The Israeli forces intermittently shelled the outskirts of Yatar, Kafra, the Lebanese Army's deserted barracks in al-Nabatiyah, Jabal al-Rafi', the al-Dabshah, and the al-Suwayda' areas throughout yesterday.

'Terrorist' Killed Firing at Israel Navy

TA0503063595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Over the weekend, a terrorist squad tried to fire a katyusha at an Israel Navy ship in southern Lebanon, but the attempt failed and one of the terrorists was killed. Earlier, Hizballah had announced that a Lebanese fisherman was killed when an Israel Navy ship fired a missile at the 'Adlun port, south of Sidon. It transpired, however, that a squad from al-Nabatiyah had attempted to launch a missile at the Israel Navy ship, but it exploded in the hands of one of the terrorists.

Further on Israeli Blockade, Shelling

NC0503123895 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli naval blockade of the Lebanese coast continues for the 25th day in a row. This morning, the Israeli gunboats opened fire in the direction of fishermen in the al-Qulaylah area south of Tyre.

The Israeli occupation forces continue to close the crossing points between the occupied villages and the liberated villages since Wednesday [1 March] evening and throughout the 'Id al-Fitr three-day holiday. They closed the Bayt Yahun and al-Hamra' bridge crossing points.

This morning, the Israeli forces in al-Shaqif pounded the Arnun area and the Lebanese army's deserted barracks in al-Nabatiyah area. The shelling was accompanied by bursts of machine-gun fire at these areas.

At dawn today, the Israeli forces directed sporadic 155-mm and 175-mm artillery barrage at the central and western sectors. Security sources say the Israelis fired two phosphoric rounds, which is an internationally banned weapon. The two shells fell in 'Ayta al-Jabal. They also fired flares north of this area.

Damascus Reportedly Rejects Limited Pullout Proposal

JN0603144895 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 6 Mar 95

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of Christopher's arrival, Damascus rejected Rabin's recent proposal. Informed sources said that what Rabin markets is a new and exposed Israeli maneuver. The sources accused Israel through these maneuvers of being not serious in putting forth ideas and statements that lead to peace.

The sources said that Rabin's statement appears to pave the way for an announcement acknowledging the principle of complete withdrawal from the Golan. However, a thorough study of the statement in which Rabin suggests a small withdrawal in exchange for Syria's agreement to normalization with Israel on condition the issue of Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan remains pending for three years without any commitment from Israel, and even subject to confidence tests on Israel's side, shows the opposite.

The Syrian sources said that Rabin's recent statements, which are rejected by Syria, are an additional incentive to Secretary Christopher to offer new ideas that lead to peace from the premise of the credibility of the U.S. initiative which was launched in Madrid but which continues to face Israeli obstructions and maneuvers .

Commentary: 'U.S. Endeavors Should Center on Israel'

JN0303160095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 3 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: As the tour of the U.S. secretary of state draws closer, attention has started to focus on the Middle East. The United States, through its officials, has expressed its hope that the faltering peace process will be pushed forward, especially on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. Warren Christopher said he will exert all possible efforts to make progress. Out of the tour's seven days, it seems that Christopher will spend five days in Israel. For invigorating the peace process requires a new Israeli position. It is known that the Tel Aviv rulers have shown intransigence, extremism, and immoderateness since the holding of the Madrid conference.

Many thought that the Labor Party's assumption of the reins of power in Israel after the Likud would give a new beginning to the peace process—something that has not taken place thus far. Yitzhaq Rabin has demonstrated far more intransigence and immoderateness than Yitzhaq Shamir did. The Syrian and Lebanese tracks have failed to realize any progress due to the Israeli Government's refusal to commit itself to the contents of Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and the land-for-peace principle. Rabin has presented a long series of security conditions, as if peace is the antithesis of security. The whole world believes that just and genuine peace is the optimal guarantee of security. Rabin has not only clogged the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, but also stepped up his acts of aggression against southern Lebanon's villages and towns. This time he has gone as far as imposing a naval blockade on southern Lebanon's ports and threatening to paralyze Lebanese maritime movement. With this he denied Lebanon the right to ask for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425 and even ignored that there is such a resolution.

Although Israel excited a great media furor upon the signing of the Oslo agreement in Washington and maintained that peace has become an established fact in the Middle East following that agreement, it admits today that the agreement failed to provide it with security and has frustrated the hopes of Israelis. Therefore, it abstained from implementing its remaining provisions related to the redeployment of the Israeli Army in the West Bank and the holding of Palestinian elections. It asked 'Arafat to make a choice between foiling the agreement or striking at the Palestinian resistance factions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Although the self-rule authority arrested many Palestinian resistance members, the security conditions witnessed no improvement. They can never witness any improvement because the Oslo agreement does not acknowledge the Palestinian people's rights, but rather consecrates the Israeli domination of their destiny. Instead of drawing the proper lessons, the Tel Aviv rulers insist on their wrongdoing.

The question observers raise is: If the Israeli Army, with all its personnel and equipment, failed to crush the Palestinian intifadah, how can the limited self-rule authority succeed in carrying out what Israel failed to do?

Ahead of Christopher's arrival in the region, the Tel Aviv rulers escalated the situation in southern Lebanon and spread a series of rumors to the effect that Washington is waiting for answers from Damascus. Everybody knows that Damascus has done all that can be done to push the peace process forward and that the only obstacle is Israel's refusal to implement Security Council resolutions and return the Golan to Syria and southern Lebanon to Lebanon. Right from the outset, Syria rejected phased settlement plans and peace by installments and insisted on reaching a just and comprehensive solution to the conflict.

The unavailing Oslo experiment has made Syria even more convinced that just and comprehensive peace alone can provide security and stability to the Middle East. To Syria, just, comprehensive peace means, above all, Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan, southern Lebanon, and all occupied territories; the full implementation of Security Council resolutions; and the removal of settlements.

Syria and Lebanon have voiced their readiness to make full peace in exchange for full withdrawal. No one has heard from Israel's rulers anything that might indicate a similar readiness. They want negotiations for the sake of negotiating and to waste time, and thus make gains. Therefore, U.S. endeavors should center on Israel. For, without a real change in the position of the Tel Aviv rulers and an explicit commitment to full withdrawal, it will be impossible for the peace process to realize progress—it is even threatened with collapse if the current Israeli intransigence continues.

Government Official Deplores U.S.'Partiality'

MM0303155695 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 3 Mar 95 p3

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani: "Syria Believes U.S. Partiality Could Destroy Peace Process"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus—Syria said yesterday that the U.S. partiality to Israel on the nuclear treaty and in the Security Council debates undermines the U.S. image and credibility, and that alignment with Israel in the peace process as well would destroy that credibility and the peace process itself.

A Syrian official has stated that Washington must act more effectively not only to stop the Israeli aggressions against south Lebanon but also to rescue the entire peace process which is beginning to require firmness in view of the problems and obstacles it is facing at more than one level.

The Syrian official added that the escalation of the aggression against south Lebanon coincided with Christopher's new tour of the region. He said Israel has always been in the habit of inflaming the situation in the region in order to avoid any serious moves by the American sponsor of the peace process to boost that process and find the minimum necessary common denominators to ensure its continuation and eventual success. Israel's aim, he said, is also to postpone Israel's inevitable full and unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights.

The Syrian official also said that Israel is banking on singling out Lebanon which, in its view, would compel Syria to accept the principle of separate solutions, but that would certainly be a losing bet because Syria and Lebanon are now more determined than ever to insist on the constant principles of the peace process based on the UN resolutions and the land-for-peace premise.

'Sources': New U.S. Ideas Could Activate Talks

JN0503131195 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 5 Mar 95

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Syrian sources have informed Radio Monte Carlo that forceful new U.S. ideas could activate the talks on the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations, which is stalemated due to Israeli ideas that have thus far proven to be failures. Ahead of the arrival of the U.S. secretary of state in the region, Syria has underscored a host of stands to make it clear to all that there is no room for bargaining over them.

First, President al-Asad reiterated a few days ago that Syria will not endorse any solution that does not meet its needs. This means that any future solution must be grounded in the international resolutions that ensure Syrian sovereignty over all Syrian territory. Second, President al-Asad renewed his rejection of separate deals, stating that Syria, which takes all possibilities into account, does not follow in the footsteps of anybody when issues related to its destiny are at stake. Third, President al- Asad indicated that Syria will not succumb to any pressure whatsoever, and that nobody on Earth can make it accept something it loathes. Fourth, Syrian Foreign Minister al-Shar' has recently emphasized that Syria will not sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty unless Israel does. Fifth, informed sources have quoted Syrian officials as stating that it is impossible to separate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations despite all pressures and despite Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon, which, first and foremost, aim to make Lebanon accept a separate deal with Israel.

Afghanistan

Rabbani Forces Launch Assault in Southwest Kabul

BK0603091195 Hong Kong AFP in English 0848 GMT 6 Mar 95

[By Terence White]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 6 (AFP)—The battle for Kabul intensified Monday [6 March] after President Borhanoddin Rabbani unleashed an assault on rival Shiite fighters in the southwest of the city.

Sukhoi-22 fighters of the presidential forces made bombing runs on positions of the pro-Iranian Hezb-e Wahdat group, the main Shiite Muslim militia. But Wahdat fighters were said to be putting up stiff resistance.

Explosions rang across the rest of the city, in the hands of the contested president and his military right hand man, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud.

The spokesman at the Rabbani-controlled defence ministry said Wahdat was under attack from all sides, by troops loyal to Rabbani and his Ettehad-e Eslami faction ally, Rasul Sayyaf.

He added: "We have no information on territorial gains. The fighting is continuing."

Pro-Rabbani forces were observed by AFP in the former Russian Cultural Centre near Dehmazang Square, in southern Kabul, where they were supported by a Russian-made T-55 battle-tank. But their advance was blocked by heavy Wahdat fire.

"I have to get these rockets to my commander fast," said one frontline trooper crouched in a bunker as mortar bombs sprayed shrapnel overhead.

Many pro-Rabbani reinforcements were seen arriving at the frontline with only their Kalashnikov assault rifles and no spare ammunition.

Rabbani's jets made at least 10 bombing runs on Wahdat positions, including the Shiite frontlines facing the Russian Cultural Centre, in an effort to dislodge the defenders.

Unconfirmed reports from rear-line pro-Rabbani commanders said their troops had made a southwards advance, from Dehmazang Square and the Kabul University into the Wahdat-controlled suburb of Karte-4.

A defence ministry source said earlier that the assault sought "to clean out Wahdat from southwest Kabul," after negotiations had broken down.

"We are going for the military option," he said.

Abdol Ali Mazari, head of the pro-Iranian Wahdat, warned Sunday that he expected an attack from Rabbani. There have been skirmishes between the two militia for several weeks which have brought warnings from Iran.

The Wahdat leader expressed confidence that his fighters could withstand any Rabbani storm.

Despite the early resistance, his force is precariously caught between the president's forces and those of the advancing Taleban militia of Islamic students.

The Taleban have taken nine provinces south of Kabul and forced Wahdat's main ally, the Hezb-e Eslami, to evacuate their positions at the entrance to Kabul. The Taleban's declared aim is to disarm all the traditional mujahedeen forces and enforce a strict Islamic government.

The Wahdat militia are renowned for their tough streak and Mazari said they have been reinforced by more than 1,000 ethnic Uzbek fighters and 700 other Shiites. But the force is poorly armed compared to the Taleban and Rabbani's army.

Rabbani has held on to power even though his term ended in December. UN attempts to persuade him to stand down and hand over power to a transitional administration have been undermined by the Taleban advance and now the new fighting.

Rabbani and Mazari had been negotiating over power sharing. The Wahdat leader said Sunday that even though Rabbani was not a legitimate ruler he was in favour of reconciliation.

"If Rabbani gives us our 25 percent share then we will sit for negotiations and seek ways to legitimize his government," said Mazari.

Government Forces Bomb Hezb-e Wahdat Positions

LD0603095295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 6 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to various news agency reports, Afghan Government forces began extensive operations early today against Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami-ye positions in southwestern districts of Kabul.

A spokesman for Afghanistan's Defense Ministry announced: Government fighter aircraft are bombing Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami positions in the Karte Seh district, southwest of Kabul. No report giving details of these operations is available.

Rocket Attack on Kabul; No Casualty Figures

LD0403161295 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Rockets landed today in the residential areas of Kabul. A responsible security source told the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY correspondent that the rebellious Mazari band fired rockets into the residential areas of wards 10 and 4 in Kabul. Some residents lost their lives, and the rockets caused material damage. The source added that the precise number of casualties has not been reported. Warmonger and the rebellious band of Mazari fired the lethal rockets into the residential areas of Kabul at a time when our Muslim fellow countrymen were visiting their relatives and friends on the third day of Id.

Wahdat Says Rabbani, Not Taleban Threat to Kabul

BK0503134995 Hong Kong AFP in English 1318 GMT 5 Mar 95

[By Terence White]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, March 5 (AFP)—The leader of the opposition Shiite faction based in southwest Kabul said Sunday [5 March] that the forces of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani were more of a military threat to them than the militant Taleban movement.

"We have received reports that (pro-Rabbani forces) are bracing to attack us, but we have no concern about the Taleban," Shiite leader Abdul Ali Mazari told AFP.

Mazari alleged that large tracts of southwest Kabul controlled by his Hezb-e Wahdat faction "have become deserted because of harrassment fire" from pro-Rabbani forces based on the central-city mountain peaks.

He expressed confidence in the readiness of his men, whom he said were backed up by "more than 1,000" Uzbek fighters and another 700 Shiites from a former rival faction which had defected to Wahdat.

"We are fully prepared for any fighting, no shortages exist," declared Mazari.

He denied that the recent Kabul defeat of his Hezb-e Eslami allies—whose former Charasyab headquarters 25 kilometres (15 miles) southeast of Kabul is now occupied by the Taleban—had weakened their anti-Rabbani alliance.

"There is no change in the balance of power in Kabul," asserted Mazari.

He claimed the Taleban have replaced Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami as a challenge to Rabbani's topgun, ex-defence minister Ahmad Shah Mas'ud.

"The Taleban don't want to fight us until they have sorted out Mas'ud," said Mazari. "We are not a priority for the Taleban."

The Wahdat leader said even though Rabbani was not a legitimate ruler he was in favour of reconciliation, not fighting, with the president.

But, Mazari stressed that hostilities between Wahdat and pro- Rabbani forces would not cease until "our people are given a 25 percent share" in both the government and the state's armed forces.

"If Rabbani gives us our 25 percent share then we will sit for negotiations and seek ways to legitimize his government," said Mazari.

Similarly, Mazari's reponse to Taleban demands that Wahdat along with all other factions must surrender their weapons, was that this was impossible unless their fair share was granted in any future Afghan government.

There was sporadic small-arms fire between Wahdat and pro-Rabbani forces around the frontlines of Dehmazang Square Sunday although earlier there was an exchange of dead fighters between both sides here.

Further south in Darulaman Palace, which the Shiites now share with the remnants of ex-communist General Abdol Rashid Dostam's Uzbek forces in Kabul, gunmen were seen relaxing in the sun.

Opposite Darulaman at the badly damaged Kabul Museum, Wahdat guards paced the passageway under the serene gaze of an ancient Buddha statue, playing a flute.

Exhibition rooms in the museum have been locked and some windows concreted up by a United Nations team in order to protect the remnants of Afghanistan's national treasures stored there.

Taleban for Peaceful Settlement of Crisis

LD0503130595 Tehran IRNA in English 1252 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 5, IRNA—The press spokesman of Taleban, Afghan theological students, Molavi Mofti Ma'sum, has said that Taleban would continue its efforts to end Afghan crisis through negotiation although its talks with the Afghan Government have failed.

"We are trying to avoid war and bloodshed and the government of Borhanoddin Rabbani has no other option but to accept our demands," the spokesman told IRNA by telephone from city of 'Quetta' Saturday [4 March].

Reiterating the Talebans' demand for complete disarmament of all forces and for undertaking the responsibility of security in Kabul, he said the demand has met the opposition of the Kabul government and Ahmad Shah Masud in particular.

The spokesman, terming the U.N. plan on transfer power as being ineffective in ending the simmering crisis in Afghanistan, noted that Mehmud Mestiri, the UN special envoy on Afghanistan should support the demands of the Taleban, if he wanted his mission to succeed.

He said the leadership of the Taleban consisted of 25 members mostly Afghan commanders who had taken part in the jihad (holy war) of the Afghan people.

The spokesman categorically refuted reports that some of Taleban military commanders were from the former communist regime ruling Afghanistan.

He noted that tranquility has been restored in all provinces controlled by Taleban forces and that the group has won the support of the Afghan people.

Despite earlier prediction that a war would break out between the Kabul government and the Taleban with the end of the fasting month of Ramadan there is yet no indication of a possible clash between the two parties.

Khales Group Opposes Foreign Solutions

LD0303181695 Mashhad Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Dari 1430 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The leader of the Yunes Khales group of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] of Afghanistan, has supported the method for transferring power in that country which was prepared with the agreement of all the Afghan leaders. According to the Islamic Republic News Agency from Islamabad, Mawlawi Yunes Khales said in an interview that solutions that are put forward in this connection by foreign countries and organizations will not succeed. He said that Mahmoud Mestiri, leader of the UN delegation, intends to set up a non-Islamic government in Afghanistan. Therefore, Hezb-e Eslami has recalled its representatives which it put forward. Mawlawi Yunes Khales added: Peace in Kabul and all over Afghanistan will be established only when the Afghan leaders succeed in achieving comprehensive and complete agreement among them.

At the same time, a new group of religious students from Farah Province in west Afghanistan warned the Taleban movement that if they attack Kabul, the movement's positions in Kandahar will be attacked.

India

Expert Group Holds Third Meeting With PRC

'Press Release' Details Session

BK0403154095 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 1433 GMT 4 Mar 95

["Press Release"—ISI Headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The third meeting of the India-China Expert Group was held in New Delhi on 2-4 March 1995. The Chinese delegation was led by Mr. Wang Changyi, deputy director general, Asia Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and comprised of experts from their concerned departments. The Indian delegation was led by Mr. Shiv Shankar Menon, joint secretary (North East), Ministry of External Affairs. It consisted of representatives from the Ministries of External Affairs, Defense, and Home Affairs, the Army Headquarters, and the Survey of India.

The Expert Group reviewed the progress made at its first two sessions held in February and April 1994, and continued deliberations on the tasks assigned to it under the agreement on the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China border areas. The mandate of the Expert Group includes assisting the Joint Working Group in clarification of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China, reduction of military forces along the India-China LAC, other confidence building measures, and verification methods.

At the third meeting both sides were pleased to note that the situation along the India-China LAC was peaceful. They also expressed satisfaction that the confidence building measures already in place between them were working well. Recognizing the importance of effective confidence building measures, they held discussions on further such measures. The two sides had a useful exchange of views on the drafts prepared by the Indian side on prior notification of military exercizes and prevention of air intrusion across the India -China LAC. The two sides also agreed that additional designated points for meetings between the border personnel of the two countries will be established at Nathuy La in the Sikkim sector and a point to be agreed in the middle sector of the India-China border areas. At present, the border personnel of India and China hold scheduled and flag meetings at Bum La and Spanaggur Gap in the eastern and Western sectors respectively. Both sides adopted a pragmatic and forward looking approach in these discussions which were held in a friendly atmosphere. The next meeting of the Expert Group will be held in Beijing at a mutually convenient date in 1995 and will be preceded by a meeting of the Joint Working Group in New Delhi.

New Delhi
4 March 1995

Commentary Views 'Significant' Steps

BK0503111895 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 5 Mar 95

[Commentary by Arun Kumar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and China have taken yet another small, but significant step to improve their relations with an agreement to establish more points for meeting between their security personnel on the border. The agreement was reached yesterday after three days of talks between experts groups of the two countries charged with determining the alignment of the Line of Actual Control—LAC—on their disputed border. An agreement on where the Line of Control lies would go a long way toward stabilizing peace and tranquility in the border areas. The expert groups also considered a draft agreement on stopping air intrusions and informing each other about their military exercises. The progress made by the expert groups would greatly help the Joint

Working Group with a mandate to resolve the vexed border dispute between India and China.

Sino-Indian relations have witnessed a continuing uptrend since the former prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi's historic visit to China in 1988. Chinese premier Li Peng returned the visit three years later. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao visited China in September 1993. He came back with an accord to promote confidence-building measures. Since then, there have varied contacts between the two countries at different levels. This marked improvement in the situation has been brought about by realization on both sides that their boundary question is indeed extremely difficult and complicated and it would be futile to peg development of other aspects of bilateral relations to its resolution.

Both sides are hoping that cooperation in diverse fields would generate mutual trust and public opinion for the resolution of the border problem. The Sino-Indian Joint Working Group on the boundary question which is due to hold its eighth meeting in Beijing later this year would do well to forge an accord in mutual reduction of troops along their borders and putting other military confidence- building measures in place. The two countries have opened two routes for border trade, set up consulate general in Shanghai and Bombay, and have taken several important steps for technological cooperation. India and China have also shared perceptions of issues related to trade and development, human rights, environment, and transport technology. Delhi and Beijing should encourage these factors, if the two Asian giants wish to win their rightful place in the comity of nations.

Russian Nuclear Center To Set Up Joint Venture

BK0403102995 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 24 Feb 95 p 1

[Report by Dwijottam Bhattacharjee]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Russian Federal Nuclear Centre has offered to set up a joint venture here to supply its products to the Indian government and other agencies on a commercial basis.

The joint venture, to be called General Business Concern, will be set up with a New Delhi-based small trading company, Galena Export House, managed by Subhash Chowdhury.

The Russian government has already given the Federal Centre the go-ahead for such a venture. The Indian government's approval will be sought through a formal application to be submitted within the next few weeks by Galena Export House.

Apart from non-controversial products related to medical and scientific research, the Russian agency has already decided to hawk one of its defence items through the venture: bullet-proof jackets.

But the most important area into which the venture proposes to make a foray is nuclear research-related products.

"Over the years, the Federal Nuclear Centre has had excellent relations with the Indian government, and a significant record of cooperation already exists", Chowdhury told Business Standard. "Now the centre wishes to exploit this fund of goodwill on a commercial basis", he added.

Chowdhury confirmed that vital nuclear research-related products would also be on offer from the venture. "With the United States extremely cagey about giving India any nuclear-related technology at all, India could well turn out to be a significant market for various kinds of technology and equipment".

New Delhi has been trying to increase India's capabilities in peaceful uses of nuclear power, but has been hampered by the absence of technology and equipment support from developed countries.

The government has been under constant pressure to stop research in this area, and its refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has become a major international issue.

Russian state-owned agencies had helped India initiate nuclear research and had kept it going with some material support before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

This aspect of Indo-Russian cooperation has suffered badly following the break-up of the USSR.

Now, however, the erstwhile state subsidy-driven Russian companies are seeking to reorient themselves on a commercial basis and the Russian Federal Nuclear Centre's decision to open shop in India is a part of that effort.

Official Discusses Iran Ties During Visit to Greece

BK0403095995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has called for closer cooperation with Iran. In an interview with the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC NEWS AGENCY in Athens, the minister of state for external affairs, Mr. Salman Khursheed, said India has very close economic and cultural links with Iran, and therefore it is important to sustain the relationship for mutual benefit.

Mr. Khursheed, who is on a three-day visit to Athens, met the Greek defense under secretary [title as heard], Mr. Nikolaos Kouris, and discussed ways to promote defense cooperation with Greece.

U.S. Official Remarks Question Kashmir Accession

BK0403111095 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 4 Mar 95 p 12

[Report by diplomatic editor]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, March 3—US Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphel's remarks that the status of Kashmir is disputed, that the US is helpless in stopping Pakistan from sponsoring terrorism in the Valley and her anxiety to circumvent the Pressler Amendment have surprised official circles here.

The Indian leadership had received firm assurances from top leaders in the Clinton Administration that they were neutral on Kashmir and favoured its settlement through bilateral India-Pakistan talks. But, Ms Raphel has once again left no one in doubt that her Government continues to back Pakistan.

By insisting that "the geographical area of the former princely-State of Jammu and Kashmir is disputed territory", she has questioned the State's accession to India and tacitly justified Pakistan's invasion of one-third of the Valley. This also indicates that the US is prepared to broker a settlement on Pakistan's behalf an offer which India has outright rejected "for its own reasons."

The Clinton Administration has not been consistent on its stand either. Speaking before the South Asia Society in Washington recently, Ms Raphel admitted that the Kashmir issue is complex and cannot be resolved by any single guiding principle. It is a political, economic, law and order, security and social issue and since it is a multidimensional problem, undimensional solutions will essentially fail.

"Also, while history frames the background to Kashmir, the events and actions which make up that historical background should not veto or mortgage future solutions. To put it in another way, present realities must help shape the solutions of tomorrow." She also spoke of a political dialogue, reconciliation and greater respect for human rights by all parties.

On the issue of Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism, Ms Raphel has reiterated what the State Department has been saying in its annual reports for many years without, however, explaining why Pakistan was taken off the terrorist watch list. President Clinton, recently, issued an executive order to fight terrorism globally and called upon peace-loving nations to join the US with renewed fervour to combat it. Refusal to act against Pakistan, while admitting that it is responsible for sponsoring terrorism against India, only suggests that the US does not follow uniform standards in the matter.

The Indian perception on the evolution of a new security relationship between US and Pakistan is proving right. Mr Raphel has said that at bottom, the US and Pakistan have an interest in working together for the "evolution of progressive, moderate states in the area which extends beyond South Asia to the Persian Gulf and Central Asia."

Similar sentiments were expressed by US Defence Secretary William J. Perry who was here recently. He said that Pakistan was the key to stability in South Asia and a model of moderation for the Islamic world. It is admitted that the revival of the Consultative Group underscores a shift in the US perception of Pakistan's role in South Asia and the neighbouring region.

The pressure on Islamabad on the nuclear issue has abated as also on sponsorship of terrorism against India. The Pakistan Government now feels that its freedom of manoevre on issues like Kashmir and nuclear Weapons programme has expanded considerably.

It is pointed out that on the question of India getting a permanent seat in the UN Security Council also, Ms Raphel has given the veto to Pakistan. She has made it clear that the US also backs Kashmir settlement favourable to Pakistan. It was also indicated that there is little chance of India's candidature for the Security Council being even entertained till the Kashmir issue is out of the way.

Jammu Kashmir Police Create Human Rights Group

BK0503103995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, a special cell has been created in the state police to look after human rights abuse. It will be headed by a superintendent of police. Two superintendents of police have also been posted in Jammu and Anantnag Districts. The posts have been created for better coordination between the security forces and the state police in dealing with antimilitancy operations.

Ten 'Top Militants' Killed in Kashmir Raid

BK0503160595 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, 10 top militants, including three foreign nationals, were killed in separate encounters with security forces in Doda District last night. According to official sources, an Army patrol party on a tip-off raided certain militant hideouts in the Bhalla area and shot dead six militants in an hour-long encounter. Four militants were killed in the same locality in another encounter. The militants hiding in a house were asked by the security forces to surrender. But, they opened fire on the troops. A huge quantity of arms and ammunition has been recovered from the site.

Another 170 'Extremists' Surrender in Tripura

BK0403102195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Tripura, 170 more extremists have surrendered before the state labor and transport minister, Mr. Ranjit Deb Nath, in Agartala. An official spokesman told reporters that they also deposited their arms and ammunition. Over 2,850 ultras have surrendered since the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] government came to power in April 1993.

Meanwhile, militants gunned down a CPI-M worker and seriously injured four others in North Tripura last night.

Iran

Military Exercise Begins in Persian Gulf, Oman Sea

LD0503173395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The military exercise code-named Tamna began this morning in the blue waters of the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea.

[Begin correspondent Bandar-e Abbas recording] The military exercise code-named Tamna, aimed at enhancing the level of military readiness of the personnel of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, began this morning with the code words: Peace be upon you, O Lord of the pious. They are taking place in the Iranian waters of the Persian Gulf, Hormuz Straight, and Oman Sea.

The first day of the exercise is being held with the participation of surface and underwater units, destroyers, and submarines, as well as Air Force fighter planes. The participating units carried out tactical training and sea battles, tactical communications, the assessment of units of a hypothetical enemy, active and passive defense, and chemical defense with accuracy and diligence in the predetermined waters.

The Tamna military exercise will continue for five days in the blue waters of the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea.

Bandar-e Abbas, Central News Unit, the center of the Persian Gulf. [end recording]

U.S. 'Pressure' Hinders Joint Azeri Oil Project

LD0403143095 Tehran IRNA in English 1401 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March, 4, IRNA—A National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) official here Saturday [4 March] announced that Washington's political intervention has hindered Iran's formal admission to an Azeri oil consortium.

NIOC Director for International Ventures, Seyyed Mehdi Husseyni who recently visited England, heading a delegation to follow up issues related to Iran's membership in the project, termed the outcome of his talks with Azeri officials and other members of the international consortium in London as positive.

He added that all non-American consortium members agree to NIOC's participation in exploration and exploitation of Azeri oil in the Caspian Sea.

The U.S. companies, which own some 40 percent of the project's shares also agree with Iran's membership, and in fact it is the U.S. Government which exerts political pressures upon them to oppose Iran's membership, Husseyni noted.

He reiterated that Azeri officials are to find a diplomatic solution to the problem.

Referring to the recent telephone conversation between the Iranian President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and his Azeri counterpart Heydar Aliyev, Husseyni said the Azeri president has underlined his country's support for Iran's membership in the oil consortium.

The negotiations between Azeri and Iranian presidents are due to be continued soon so that a diplomatic solution is found, the official stated.

Commenting on production and transfer of Azerbaijan's oil, he said two subjects are currently raised in the consortium, one is the production of up to 100,000 barrels of oil a day, with Iran being the most economical route (Baku-Tabriz route), provided that Iran joins the consortium.

The second choice, he said, is the shipment of oil to the Mediterranean or Black Sea in the long term.

To use the Iranian territory for transfer of Azeri oil pipelines is a concession Iran would give to the consortium, he concluded.

Editorials Criticize U.S. Statements on Missiles

LD0503134895 Tehran IRNA in English 1247 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 5, IRNA—Two English dailies here Sunday [5 March] editorialized on the recent charge made by the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, that Iran had installed missiles at the mouth of the Persian Gulf.

The TEHRAN TIMES daily said what Shalikashvili "did not say is that this is an Iranian territory, and what he did not say is that the U.S. sold us these missiles."

Saying that Iran was accused by the West of having a hand in the bomb blast in Jewish community center in Buenos Aires last year and also in the bombing of Pan Am 103 which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988 but was later recognized innocent, the daily noted that "in other words, Iran is a good scapegoat. Whatever happens, blame it on Iran. And then, oops, sorry, we dont's think Iran did it."

It further said "to what extent must we pay attention to such allegations, using up energy to answer them? Should we write editorials, belittling ourselves by denying them, or should we sip tea, watch the news, shrug, and say, 'no comment'?"

The other daily, KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL, remarked that in America "the wholesale idea was to present Iran as the pariah state involved in nefarious activities from trying to build the atomic bomb to violations of human rights. Given the decline in everything America's political establishment claimed to represent, the unprecedented hostility against Tehran was more or less understandable."

"U.S. military leaders, unable to provide rational explantions regarding the Pentagon's lost peace in the Middle East and Africa, are taking turns to remind nations that Iran is problematic," the editorial said, "actually their anti-Iran stunts too have become long on rhetoric and short in substance. By expressing deep 'worry' about Iran, the general(s) are exposing weaknesses of the U.S. military-industrial establishments in the strategic Persian Gulf region."

Referring to Shalikashvili's claims, it said the general had made the remarks just to attract the attention of American people to himself.

"If Iran develops weapons of mass destruction we would face a very, very serious challenge and all our friends in that area would face a very serious challenge," the paper quoted him as saying.

"Diplomats, military analysts and correspondents," the daily noted, "were soon to point that Iran's hawk missiles on its island is a no big deal, for two reasons—firstly the missiles and lots of other weapons were stationed there throughout the 1980-88 U.S.- backed Iraqi imposed war, and secondly the said missile systems are purely defensive weapons."

"Normally military top brass are expected to be intelligent people not trying to make a mockery of their office. By worrying about Tehran's normal defense policy general 'S' was, if anything, not displaying his military credentials. He was, unknowingly, admitting that Washington's military equations are no less inaccurate than its political strategy."

The editorial concluded by writing that "yes, America and its 'friends' in Iran's neighbourhood should be 'worried'. But that is not because of Iran's policies. Tehran's Islamic credentials are no top secret. What the U.S. and company should be really concerned about is their own abusiveness and blunders and not the lofty message of Islam which a growing number of nations are studying with utmost attention."

Daily Condemns New U.S. 'Propaganda Attack'

LD0403093095 Tehran IRNA in English 0905 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March, 4, IRNA—In a sharp propaganda attack against Iran, a U.S. official has accused Tehran of deploying anti-aircraft missiles on its own southern islands, proclaiming this to be a threat against the free passage of vessels in the Persian Gulf waters, a morning daily wrote Saturday [4 March].

The U.S. Armed Forces joint chief of staff, John Shalikashvili's imperceptive utterance is quite shopworn, merely representing another link in the continuum of Washington's propaganda campaign against Iran in the last 15 years, the English-language IRAN NEWS said.

Nonetheless, the editorial noted, touching on a few points seems to be in order: Following the end of the World War Two, America's political and economic structure has been sustained on the principle of having a clear and present danger.

"Over the last five decades, this ploy was rather fraudulently upheld by the massive anti-communist campaign," it stressed.

With the collapse of the Soviet empire, a substitute scarecrow is needed and conveniently supplied by the vitality of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it said adding that Islam and Iran thus become the new bogeymen.

The daily reiterated that NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes has also fallen victim to American needs in this respect, as made clear by his irresponsible shooting from the lip about the 'threat' of Islam in recent weeks.

"With the new Democratic-Republican division of power on the American political scene, both sides are preparing their forces for a show of strength," it wrote.

This in part explains why the Democrat Warren Christopher's broadsides against Iran over the last two years are now being supplemented by the Republican Party's Newt Gingrich, recently appointed as speaker of the house, the article added.

It said that what the U.S. joint chief of staff recently stated about an Iranian threat to shipping is a blatant lie to begin with, and the Pentagon had no choice but to retract it.

"However, even if his words were true, the question would have been exactly which international legal norm has been violated by an act asserting Iran's sovereignty in its own territory," IRAN NEWS argued.

"We are being accused of deployment of anti-aircraft missiles, plainly a defensive weapon, inside our legitimate borders," it said adding, "meanwhile, the hypocrites in the Pentagon have granted themselves the illegitimate right of dispatching large numbers of U.S. troops thousands of miles away from home to the Persian Gulf creating, in flagrant violation of all international norms and regualtions, a nuisance for the vessels entering the region's ports," it added.

What world public opinion wants to know is what sort of threat do the anti-aircraft missiles allegedly-deployed in the southern islands of Iran pose to the free passage of ships in the Persian Gulf?, the paper asked.

"It is a fact that Iran enjoys a strategically dominant position vis-a-vis the Hormuz critical waterway and has the might to block the passage through which some 25 percent of the world's traded crude oil passes before reaching international markets," it underlined.

But, it stressed, above all other facts is the one pertaining to Iran's own economic livelihood which so completely depends on the free access of all international oil tankers to the Strait of Hormuz.

Even during the eight years of war imposed on Iran by the Iraqis and their Western allies, the Islamic government did not allow any disruption in the passage of ships through the strait, it said and noted that yet there is another troublesome question here that comes to mind.

Europe and Japan are absolutely reliant on the oil which makes its way to their cities through the Strait of Hormuz, but the U.S. is not, the paper continued.

"Thus, should one not be tempted to entertain the idea that perhaps the ingredients of a new anti-Europe, anti-Japan recipe are being mixed in the White House kitchen?," it concluded.

Sheykholeslam Denies Talks With Israel

NC0403120695 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 23 Feb 95 p 15

["Exclusive" interview by Hoseyn Sheykholeslam, deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs, by unidentified correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Mr. Sheykholeslam, the Zionist regime and the Arab governments participating in the talks with that regime have been seeking a way for extricating the peace talks from their present state of stagnation for a long time. 'Arafat and Rabin's visit to France and earlier the visits by the representatives of the PLO, Israel, and Jordan to the United States can be viewed within the same framework. In your opinion, what is the reason for the current impasse?

[Sheykholeslam] I think if we were to give a more detailed answer to this question, we would have a better idea of its dimensions. [passage omitted]

The Americans presented their plan called "the new world order" to perpetuate their sway over the region. Its objectives included transforming Israel into the main director of the region with a gradual expansion of its domination over the Middle Eastern countries. The idea was that these countries should gradually become subservient to Israel. [passage omitted]

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Allow me to return to the actual issue. You stated that the aim of the new world order in the Middle East region was that Israel should become the director of the region and other countries should subservient to it. How is this being followed up?

[Sheykholeslam] I wanted to elaborate on this. One of the factors necessary for its success is that Israel should be a peaceful and stable country. However, this did not happen in practice as the intifadah inflicted shattering blows on Zionism. [passage omitted]

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] So you wish to state that the stagnation in the peace efforts and their failure is due to the wrathful popular struggle in Lebanon and Palestine that has shattered Israel's back and has kept it from attaining the objectives it had envisioned from the compromise talks for peace?

[Sheykholeslam] This is one of the reasons for the stalemate in these talks. The second reason is as I said earlier, the fruitlessness of the plan to delegate power to 'Arafat. As I mentioned on an earlier occasion, Israel merely wished to use 'Arafat as a means for crushing the popular opposition inside Palestine.

This plan encountered defeat in practice due to the continuation and proliferation of the popular struggle and Israel does not see any further reason to fulfill its pledges to 'Arafat or the so-called autonomous government. This lack of commitment to the alleged peace efforts has caused them to become bogged down.

Finally, another reason for the talks becoming stymied is the categorical and commendable stance of Syria and Lebanon before Israel. The Syrians have laudably stood steadfast before Israel's excessive demands and have brought honors upon the Arab front. The Syrians are not prepared to accept the humiliation that all the Arab regimes have bought with their very souls. Lebanon, which is also Syria's ally, has not succumbed before Israel either. The Lebanese, like the Syrians, also believe that Israel should depart from their territory unconditionally and this conduct of the Lebanese and Syrians should be a lesson for all the Middle East Arab regimes so that they may not pay ransom to the enemy so easily. [passage omitted]

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Mr. Sheykholeslam, for quite a while Israel has been claiming that Iran has nuclear technology and as long as Iran pursues the objective for the elimination of Israel from the region, Israel will not sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]. In this manner, the Zionists intend to blame Iran as the source of all crises in the region that stem from their not signing the NPT. Do you accept this analysis?

[Sheykholeslam] The stance that Israel has adopted against the Islamic Republic of Iran on the issue of the NPT is merely a propagandistic ploy to justify its disrespect for international laws, including the treaty. The United States, Israel, as well as the IAEA know that we do not have nuclear weapons. Our nuclear technology, which has peaceful uses—and this has been endorsed by the international organizations—does not constitute a danger to Israel.

If the Israelis are referring to our slogan of "Death to Israel," then I can say that this is the slogan of all the Muslim nations in the Middle East. The nation that has directly suffered the tyranny and oppression of Israel is pursuing this slogan to a greater extent than we are.

Our slogan of Israel's destruction is not merely ours but that of those who have been instrumental in Israel becoming isolated and ostracized for the past half century. The Israelis are opposed to all international regulations and disseminate propaganda to justify their disregard for laws. I am not in favor of this accord as it is unjust and ignores the rights of Third World countries that do not have nuclear weapons. It is unfair that a series of countries should have nuclear weapons and another set of countries should be deprived of them. The world should move toward a situation where all nuclear weapons are destroyed and not some countries have them and ask others not to manufacture them.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Every year, on the eve of International Jerusalem day, the Western and Zionist mass media disseminate propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran to overshadow the philosophy regarding the observance of this day. What is Your Excellency's view of this propaganda?

[Sheykholeslam] The International Jerusalem Day is the day of the people's solidarity and their convergence together to participate in this hallowed spiritual struggle with empty hands but with reliance on God, and with an able and Islamic leadership for the toppling of a tyrannical regime. We tried this experiment successfully during the time of the fruition of the Islamic Revolution. Therefore, we were able to play the role of an instructor in teaching a new method of struggle to other Muslim nations.

It is because of this that Jerusalem Day is celebrated in a grand manner every year in Islamic countries. We hope that we will always be able to carry out this heavy responsibility in directing the Muslim nations. Since this is such a great responsibility, the powers of world arrogance use their propaganda loudspeakers to spew venom and whip up an atmosphere against our carrying out this responsibility.

Every year on the eve of Jerusalem Day, they embark on such propaganda ploys with the objective of diverting public opinion. For example, a few days ago the foreign radios mentioned talks between the Islamic Republic of Iran's officials and Zionists, which they claimed had taken place in a hotel room in Germany. All these are nauseating lies and we hope that on International Jerusalem Day once again we will witness the proclamation of hatred and abhorrence by all the nations of the world against the criminal Zionists.

Foreign Ministry Official on Israel, Peace Talks

NC0403133595 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 22 Feb 95 p 3

[Interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Hashemi by unidentified correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Mr. Hashemi, as you are aware, in the past three years that have elapsed since the trend of compromise talks between the Arabs and the Zionist regime began there has been no breakthrough to the extent that the PLO and the governments participating in the talks have asked for the U.S. and France's help for extricating themselves from the current impasse. In your opinion, what is the reason for this impasse?

[Hashemi] If we wish to give a correct response to this question we should have a clear overall picture. [passage omitted]

The regional nations were against Israel and their governments were in favor of the compromise and cooperation with Israel. Some extended their tacit consent by maintaining a silence on this state of affairs. This phenomenon changed the polarization in the Middle East. Accordingly the antithesis between the stances of the governments and the nations regarding Israel and the fact that the inclinations of the peoples gained the upper hand, resulted in undermining the efforts of the compromising parties in the Middle East. After the lapse of three years or more since the process of the overt and covert talks was initiated, these talks have not achieved any breakthrough. [passage omitted]

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Mr. Hashemi, the Zionists claim that since they feel a sense of danger with regard to Iran, they are not prepared to agree to nuclear disarmament and it is for this reason that they do not wish to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]. What is Your Excellency's view on this subject in your capacity as a deputy foreign minister?

[Hashemi] We believe that Israel is constantly trying to be considered exceptional by the international community. It employs the most intense and savage manner of torture and repression to annihilate the Palestinians and the Lebanese and says that it fears that they belong to anti-Israeli groups. Israel abducts people from other countries against international regulations, which is the most reprehensible form of government-sponsored terrorism, by saying that such and such an individual is dangerous for it. Once again it is fabricating pretexts by saying Iran or such and such a country poses a danger for Israel.

This excuse is so fallacious that it has become lackluster even in the eyes of its allied countries such as Jordan and Egypt. At present, Israel's Arab allies also consider the collection of nuclear warheads in Israel as a source of danger to them and are calling for Israel's disarmament.

Israel's rhetoric is similar regarding UN resolutions. When it is stated that the Israeli Government is an illegitimate one, the government proves the veracity of the statement time and again by its conduct. Every government in the world faces some dangers and if every one is authorized to embark on eliminating them in other parts of the world, no government or system will be able to have any security or stability.

The fact is that if Israel considers Iran a danger for itself in the region and does not wish to sign the NPT on this pretext, then all the Middle East Arab governments and even Israel's allies will consider Israel a danger to themselves. Right from its inception, Israel has never acted on international commitments and its disrespect of the NPT is not the first such example of Israel's indifference to international norms and neither the last. [passage omitted]

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Mr. Hashemi, we are on the threshold of Jerusalem Day. Could you please elaborate on your viewpoint regarding this great day that has gained the title of the Day of God?

[Hashemi] The days that the late imam had declared the Days of God are based on the aspirations of a nation and of an ideology. It is against this backdrop that Jerusalem Day has an aspirational aspect for all the Muslims of the world. This is because the presence of the Muslim nations in marches and demonstrations on Jerusalem Day is evidence of a deep infiltration of the Palestine aspirations in the heart of the Muslim nations as well as the extensive nature of anti-Zionist struggles of nations.

When we see that we are on the threshold of the international Jerusalem Day, many Arab governments strive to create obstruction in the path of these popular activities or they seek to create a dichotomy in the ranks of the Muslims by naming some other day as Jerusalem Day. This is indeed an indication of the importance of the love and enthusiasm for the Palestine aspirations in the hearts of the Muslim nations and those who want the liberation of Jerusalem. God willing, we will witness the freedom of the holy sites in Palestine especially holy Jerusalem.

Country To Defend Gulf Islands 'With All Its Might'

NC0403185895 Paris AFP in English 1634 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 4 (AFP)—Iran said Saturday [4 March] it would defend with all its might three strategic Gulf islands claimed by the United Arab Emirates.

Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said Saturday in a statement published by the government daily Iran that Tehran "would never give up its vital interests and will never compromise on its territorial integrity."

"These islands are Iranian and will stay so," he added, referring to the islands of Abu Musa, and Little and Greater Tunb at the entrance to the Straits of Hormuz, the transit point for a fifth of the world's oil supplies.

He said Iran would "defend the islands with all its strength and determination."

Velayati added: "I advise the UAE authorities to think first of the interests of their country without worrying about foreign influences and not to create a climate of mistrust in the region."

Iran and the UAE emirate of Sharjah signed an accord in 1971 for a joint administration of Abu Musa. The same year Iranian troops occupied the Tunbs as British troops withdrew and on the eve of the UAE's independence.

The UAE claims of sovereignty over all the islands resurfaced in 1992, but talks in September that year in Abu Dhabi failed after Iran refused to discuss the status of the Tunbs.

Iran has also repeatedly rejected UAE calls for the issue to be settled by the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

"Resorting to an incompetent international body will not solve the UAE's problems," Velayati added, saying Iran's territorial integrity was not for bargain.

On Tuesday U.S. Joint Chief of Staff General John Shalikashvili said U.S. reconnaissance had spotted Iran putting Hawk missiles onto launchers on islands in the Gulf without specifying which ones.

U.S. National Security Advisor Anthony Lake said the buildup of weaponry on three islands appeared to be defensive.

Iran implicitly confirmed the deployment, stressing its defence concerns against possible Israeli threat, and adding that it had the right to carry out "routine" military exercises.

An Iranian military official told the agency IRNA that "no new situation has been created in the region by the Islamic Republic of Iran" and that "regular military exercises were Iran's undeniable right."

Velayati on Gulf Islands, U.S. 'Feelers'

LD0403224395 Tehran IRNA in English 2202 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 5, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati stressed that the main element in Islamic Iran's foreign policy is "independence of opinion", in the sense that no country can impose its views on Iran.

In an exclusive interview with the Persian daily 'IRAN' which appeared Saturday [4 March], he said any decision-making in foreign policy was based on the country's national and ideological interests of which Islam was the most solid base. 'Muslim Iranians' according to Velayati, strive to defend both Islamic values and the country's cultural heritage on the domestic and international arenas.

He said this does not mean solitude and isolation, and "if there is a joint work to be done at the international level, it could be done through friendship with others but no one can dictate orders to us."

On the issue of nuclear arms in the Middle East, Velayati commented that any kind of irrational act in this sensitive region could quickly lead to break out of another world war. Therefore, he said, countries and regimes possessing nuclear arms should be dealt with seriously by the international community because in case a rivalry emerges in the region for acquiring nuclear weapons, peace and security in the Middle East would be seriously threatened which would end only in the ruin of the region as well as the whole world.

Commenting on the recent remarks of the British premier [as received] Douglas Hurd that London would not normalize its relations with Iran as long as it refused to change its stand on sentenced apostate Salman Rushdie, the foreign minister stressed that the situation was exactly vice-versa.

He reaffirmed that Iran would never look at countries who support persons who insult Islam and the sanctities of the Muslims, and that such countries stand to lose their chance of improving ties not only with Iran but with other Islamic states as well. Pointing out that 52 Muslim states had so far endorsed the late Imam Khomeyni's historic death verdict against the writer of 'The Satanic Verses', Velayati remarked that it was a delusion for those western countries who think they can mock Muslim sanctities and at the same time have friendly relations with the Islamic world.

The support of western countries for "such damned persons as Salman Rushdie", he went on to say, was actually fueling hatred of the Islamic world towards such tendencies.

Turning to Washington, Velayati dismissed the recent putting out of feelers by the U.S. for direct negotiations with Iran despite its having listed Iran as a 'terrorist' country, as "nothing new" and said in the jargon of the American administration anybody opposing it is 'terrorist', and against democracy and human rights.

Touching on Iran-Saudi Arabia relations, he said the ties were not very warm and commented that it takes more than words to establish warm relations and that there should be action as well. He also deemed it to the benefit of both countries to settle their problems. He further voiced Iran's readiness to continue the talks which started some time ago because he thought they would greatly help create an atmosphere of understanding between the two countries.

On the UAE's claim to three of the Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf, the foreign minister made it clear that the islands belonged to Iran and would remain so. He said the case could be solved through negotations, pointing out that Iran dealt with the United Arab Emirates on the issue on the basis of the 1971 agreement.

If they think the agreement was not properly implemented, the two countries could sit down and negotiate, said Velayati taking note in this respect of his visit to the UAE. "It is the turn of the UAE foreign minister to visit Iran to continue the talks," he added.

He believed that foreign hands were behind UAE's claim to the islands and its threats to take the issue to an international court. The Iranian official, however, brushed aside such threats and said "Iran was not afraid of such claims and would strongly defend its territorial integrity."

Stressing that Iran by no means would compromise its territorial integrity, he advised the UAE to mind its own affairs and not spread distrust in the region, because it would harm the UAE itself in the first place. "Iran and the UAE are neighbors and can have good relations with each other. If they have any problems with Iran, they can solve them at the negotiation table. We went to the UAE and talked with them on the issue. The UAE officials should fear in coming to Iran [as received]. Iran is not after the UAE interests," he noted. He further added that no international court could help the UAE in this regard.

Denying that Iran had adopted silence over the Russian invasion of the Caucasus Muslim republic of Chechnya in view of Russia's help in completing the Bushehr nuclear power plant, he said Iran had never been silent and the leader of the revolution Grand Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i had repeatedly voiced his views on the issue.

Velayati concluded by saying that Iran would never be silent if there Muslims were in trouble anywhere around the globe. [as received]

Oil Production Contract Signed With Dutch Company

LD0503175795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The first buy-back contract related to projects to expand oilfields in accordance with the country's second Five-Year Economic Development Plan was signed between the National Iranian Oil Company and a Dutch company.

On the basis of this agreement, the contractor will provide all the necessary investment to expand the Sirri fields, which are two important oilfields of our country in the Persian Gulf. The return on this investment will be made through the sale of oil produced in these two fields within five years, or a maximum period of eight years, after the start of production and on the basis of a crude oil sales agreement at the daily international market price.

The gas produced in these fields—together with the gas from two other fields named Sirri-C and Sirri-D, which are currently burned—will be piped, thanks to the investment provided by the contractor. In accordance with the agreement, the piped gas will be exported to Dubai at the international price for industrial application and injection.

These fields will produce a total of 120,000 barrels of oil per day. Approximately 800 billion cubic feet of gas will be extracted from the four Sirri oilfields. The estimated return from the two oilfields is about 13.5 billion dollars from the sale of oil and about 750 million dollars from the export of gas.

Also on the basis of this agreement, the contractor is duty-bound to extract the maximum quantity of the products and to make maximum use of Iranian experts and should also allocate at least 30 percent of the total cost of the project to this matter.

Rafsanjani Receives Japanese Government Envoy

LD0503163995 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The president received the Japanese Government's special envoy today.

At the meeting, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani emphasized the importance of the expansion and consolidation of ties between the two countries. He referred to the efforts by global arrogance and the Western propaganda apparatus to undermine relations between other countries and the Islamic of Republic of Iran and said: Iran is not only the biggest victim of the terrorism but has been subjected to an unfounded and undocumented propaganda onslaught by the true advocates of terrorism. The president assessed the unlawful and expansionist presence of the United States in the Persian Gulf as an obstacle toward the expansion of regional cooperation.

The president pointed out Iran's vast economic and specialist resources in implementing great technical and industrial projects, including the construction of dams, as well as the high caliber of Iranian experts in completing the petrochemical complex at Imam Khomeyni port. He stated: Pressure exerted by the United States to prevent Japan's cooperation with Iran in the construction of the Karun-4 dam is a futile effort and an insignificant move.

At the meeting, Mr. Matsunaga, the Japanese Government's special envoy, conveyed the most sincere greetings of the prime minister of that country to Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani. He described as very outstanding and rare the economic-social progress and the consolidation of the infrastructure of Iran's economy in recent years and under the auspices of the government's effort. He said: The Japanese Government believes in stability and the international prestige of the Islamic Republic of Iran and emphasizes the expansion of its ties and cooperation with Iran.

Highest UN Award Received for Antinarcotics Campaign

LD0403162895 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Islamic Republic of Iran received the highest United Nations award for fighting narcotics. Today in a seminar of the directors of the coordination council of the antinarcotics headquarters, Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati announced:

Because of its extensive cooperation with the United Nations, this award has been granted to the antinarcotics headquarters. [passage omitted]

Majles Commission Approves Budget Plan

LD0403220495 Tehran IRNA in English 2130 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 5, IRNA—The Plan and Budget Commission of the Majlis here on Saturday [4 March] approved the state budget plan for the year 1374 (to start March 21) at rls 92,101 billion.

Government revenues and other credit provisions were predicted at rls 46,410 billion inclusive of rls 42,562 billion from public revenues and 3,847 billion rials from special revenues of ministries and state institutions.

The budget plan envisaged rls 64,667 billion for expenses of state companies, banks and other profit-incentive institutes.

The Majlis commission authorised the government to collect revenues and other credits in line with specific regulations for the year 1374 in order to meet the expenses of the ministries and state institutes.

New Majles Deputy for Shahrud Elected

LD0503095595 Tehran IRNA in English 0830 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shahrud, Semnan Prov., March 5, IRNA—Seyyed Mohammad Musavi-Shahrudi gained the majority votes in the second phase of the mid-term Majlis (parliament) elections and was elected deputy for Shahrud, in Semnan Province. The elections was held on Friday [3 March].

Mir-Reza'i, in charge of Shahrud elections, said that of the total 64,308 votes cast in 147 polls, Musavi-Shahrudi and Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Sa'edi gained 49,529 and 13,935 votes respectively. Some 844 votes announced invalid.

Credentials for the new Shahrud deputy will be submitted to the Majlis for approval as soon as the result of the elections receives confirmation of the Council of Guardians.

Musavi-shahrudi holds a Ph.D. in industrial management and an MSC in economics. He is currently teaching in universities.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Hoseyni-Shahrudi, former Shahrud Majlis deputy, died of cancer five months ago.

New Guardian Council Member Appointed

LD0303184295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, esteemed leader of the Islamic Revolution, has appointed Ayatollah [as heard] Haj Sayyed Mahmud Hashemi as a member of the Guardian Council of the Constitution.

The text of the decree issued by the great leader is as follows: In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Your Excellency Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin [his clerical rank], the far-sighted scholar and jurisconsult, Mr. Haj Sayyed Mahmud Hashemi, may God give you long life.

In view of the provisions of Article 91 of the Constitution concerning the Guardian Council, and as Mr. Mohammadi-Gilani, a veteran and outstanding member of the jurisconsults of the Guardian Council, has requested to be relieved from the membership of the council after accepting a post in the judiciary power, I appoint your excellency as a member of the Guardian Council.

Being aware of your excellency's erudition, insight, precision, and clear-sightedness, I hope that your presence in the council alongside its other erudite and esteemed members will further its excellence. I beseech Almighty God for your continued success and His approbation for your excellency and the other gentlemen of the council.

'Id al-Fitr 1415, corresponding to 11 Asfand 1373
[2 March 1995]

Khamene'i Lauds Assembly of Experts

LD0503153395 Tehran IRNA in English 1500 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 5, IRNA—The leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i on Sunday [5 March] said lauded the Assembly of Experts as an "important, well-organized and responsible grouping linked with Muslim ulema."

In a meeting with members of the Assembly of Experts, the leader said Iranian clergymen introduce the Assembly of Experts as a group of selected ulama to Islamic society and the world whose stance represents the stance of all ulama of the country.

The supreme leader voiced support for the stands declared by the Assembly of Experts on various problems facing the Muslim world and said the assembly's stands are based on the interests of the world of Islam.

"The ulama have always provided shelter for the poor and the deprived people and are considered the representatives of the poor. Therefore, seeing to the affairs of the poor is what ulama are seeking to do and this is the policy being naturally pursued by the Assembly of Experts," the leader said.

Elsewhere in his speech, the leader said that working to solve the problems of the poor is the perpetual policy of the government and officials of the Islamic government. "The Islamic government has been working for the deprived, needy and oppressed people since the culmination of the Islamic revolution and I have personally followed up the issue of helping the needy and deprived people and tackling their problems," Ayatollah Khamene'i said.

Ayatollah Khamene'i emphasized the importance of the annual meeting of the experts assembly, saying that Islamic Iran was passing through an extraordinarily sensitive period.

"The enemies of Islam in explicit statements, that are inconsistent with international norms, put emphasis on economic and political activities against Iran. This indicates the sensitivity of situation but the Islamic system is more stronger, the administration is more stronger and the nation is more united than ever before," the leader said.

Ayatollah Khamene'i urged ulama and mojtahids to encounter the propaganda campaigns of the enemy and thwart its political and scientific pressure in an effort to defend Islam and the revolution.

The leader lauded the efforts underway to reconstruct the country following the eight year long Iraqi-imposed war (1980-1988) and said the country's economic credence has substantially improved.

The success of the Islamic system of government in ensuring a bright future for the Iranian people has annoyed the enemies of Islam, the leader of the Islamic revolution said.

He said that the present sensitive situation necessitates further coordination and unity between officials and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Before the leader's speech, the vice-speaker of the Assembly of Experts, Ayatollah Amini appreciated the special attention of the leader and the government to the welfare of the deprived and needy strata of society.

Ahmad Khomeyni: No Crisis, Political Problems

LD0403171295 Tehran IRNA in English 1622 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March, 4, IRNA—Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni in a meeting here Saturday [4 March] with the staff and students of Shahed University said there is nothing such as crisis or political problem in Iran. The Islamic revolution powerfully defends its rights throughout the world and that Iran's supreme leadership, authorities and people still tread the late Imam Khomeyni's path which has brought the people dignity and honour, he added.

Despite the enemy propaganda, Iranian people have strengthened their attitude towards the revolution and this year's rallies on Bahman 22 (Feb. 11 marking the victory of Islamic revolution) and Qods day (Feb. 24 last

Friday of fasting Ramadhan) provide the best example, said the son of the founder of the Islamic republic.

Foreign Affairs Deputy Explains Stance on NPT

LD0403225795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In a meeting with European Union ambassadors on Saturday [4 March] morning, the deputy minister of foreign affairs in charge of international and legal affairs explained the stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran toward the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]. Mr. Zarif expressed his hope that the existing defects will be eliminated during the conference on the extension and renewal of this treaty that will be held next spring. He stressed the need for the renewal of the NPT in such a way that the viewpoints of all the members are taken into account.

The deputy minister of foreign affairs in charge of international and legal affairs also expressed his regret that the countries that possess nuclear weapons have not acted on their commitments in accordance with this treaty. He said: A clear example of this is the arming of the Zionist regime with nuclear weapons by some countries that possess such weapons. This is a serious threat against peace and security in the Middle East.

In this meeting, the French ambassador—representing the EU ambassadors—stressed that the NPT has special significance and emphasized the need for cooperation and consultation for guaranteeing the position of the conference. He expressed his hope that the exchange of views on this issue between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the EU would continue.

Pakistan

Editorial Views 'Burden' of Relations With U.S.

BK0603053095 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 27 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Diplomacy for American Interests"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The French government have asked four American diplomats and one American citizen to leave their country immediately as they were involved in some activities which violate international diplomatic norms. There is nothing unusual about such events but the fact that the diplomats of a self-proclaimed sole superpower were caught doing what their mandate and understanding with the host country did not envisage, and that, too in a country which has been an American ally for as long as American history remembers, is much more than the usual diplomatic surprises.

The Americans are so self-centered, introvert, and parochial that they would not hesitate for a moment to betray an old friend, to deceive an ally, and to hoodwink a collaborator in order to stay under the "dignified" and much propagated umbrella of "American interest." They would topple a government if it refuses to buy their expired frozen orange juice, they would threaten you with economic boycott if you do not sell them what they want and at a price that suits them, and they would engineer public rallies, coup d'etats, and all other conceivable methods of intimidation to serve their celebrated American interests. All this is done through a carefully laid process of spying, espionage, and data collection through a host of American agencies under the supervision of the CIA. Many times, apparently innocent projects involving health, education, sanitation and other areas of social and economic development are carried out through sponsorship and collaboration in order to penetrate into sensitive areas of different countries. Even purely academic exercises on cultures and civilisations become highly politicised after they receive the touch of Uncle Sam's magic wand.

One could have never imagined them doing this mischief in a country which more than two hundred years ago contributed so much in their intellectual as well as political liberty from England. From General Lafayette to General De Gaulle and later, two centuries proudly demonstrate this relationship yet it could take only four diplomats and one American citizen to betray this legacy. Whereas the French decision to expel them was the most appropriate, we don't think the Americans would learn any lesson from this and would stop meddling in the affairs of others. But there is a lesson for others who are having a honeymoon with the lady holding the torch of liberty or even contemplating one. And that lesson is that don't trust Americans even when you feel that they are desperate enough to do their part of the deal, they could turn around and, without any remorse or regret, behave as if nothing had transpired between them and the concerned party.

Countries like Pakistan need to learn this lesson more intelligently than others. Our history also provides brief moments of excellent relations with Washington but many more periods of interfering with and monitoring our economic and political developments with the result that each phase of this relationship had resulted in us becoming more obliged, more sensitive to their dictates, and more vulnerable to old and new dangers whereas the US continues to exploit all our possible potentials to further its own interests. And all this is happening with a parallel programme of spying, collecting information and sharing it with those who detest the very existence of Pakistan. Islamabad needs to look into these dimensions of our diplomatic relations with the United States which have become more of a burden on our social and political fortunes than a transparent interaction between two countries. We need to look into this fact also, as to why and how, our each embrace with Washington leaves us more emaciated, more brittle, yet more willing for another hug?

Bhutto Seeks Sharif's Support, Previews U.S. Visit

BK0503162695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has urged Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, the leader of the opposition, to support and assist the government in promoting Pakistan's national interests. In a letter to Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister said: We should demonstrate to the world that we, as responsible leaders of the country, can work in unity at the international level in the pursuit of our national interests, setting aside internal differences. The prime minister said far-reaching changes are taking place in the world, including in our neighborhood; the heroic struggle of the Kashmiri people has reached a crucial stage; and grave injustice is being done to Muslims in several parts of the world, including Bosnia. In the changing global and regional scenario, Pakistan is confronted with both opportunities and challenges. As one of the most influential and dynamic Muslim nations in the world, Pakistan needs to play a constructive and important role in defining a new international order that conforms with our national security objectives.

Benazir Bhutto said she will soon embark on an important mission aimed at improving and strengthening Pakistan's relations with the United States and forging a new partnership with that country to meet the post-Cold War challenges. She said: Our agenda will include issues of far-reaching concern for our nation's security and wellbeing, such as Kashmir, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and missiles, economic development, and the promotion of trade. There is no difference of opinion among Pakistanis on these and other issues, irrespective of their partisan loyalties.

The prime minister said she is sure the opposition leader will agree with her on these vital and crucial issues that affect our national interests. There is no room for the politics of confrontation, because as patriotic Pakistanis we all share the same goals and values. Pakistan's interests and its people come before everything else, the prime minister added.

Last Contingent of Troops Returns From Somalia

BK0503135995 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The last contingent of Pakistani troops returned home from Somalia after performing UN peacekeeping duties in the war-ravaged country. Today's repatriation marked the completion of the withdrawal of more than 7,000 Pakistan army soldiers who participated in the two-and-half-year-long UN operation in Somalia. Earlier in Mogadishu, the rear guard element of the Pakistani peacekeepers guarded Mogadishu airport right up to the time they withdrew to the seaport to board ships for their final pullout from Somalia.

Addressing the troops, Chief of the Army Staff General Abdul Waheed said the selfless services rendered by the Pakistan personnel deployed on UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia and the courage, determination, and bravery they displayed in most trying circumstances were in keeping with the best traditions of Pakistan Army. The chief of the army staff said Pakistan firmly believes in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and since 1960 it has been actively participating in the UN multinational efforts to maintain peace and order in different parts of the world. The keenness of the United Nations to acquire the services of Pakistani peacekeepers is testimony to the high regard in which they are held for their professional competence and devotion to duty. Gen. Abdul Waheed said Pakistan's participation in peacekeeping activities of the United Nations reflected its belief in the brotherhood of mankind and its commitment to peace across the globe. The chief of the army staff paid homage to the brave Pakistani soldiers who laid down their lives in an effort to usher in peace in war-torn Somalia. He also lauded the devoted services that the troops rendered to provide succor to the starving and sick Somali men, women, and children. He expressed the hope that they would make good use of the rich experience they had gained while working with foreign armies in varied cultural, geographic, and security conditions.

Sri Lanka

President: LTTE 'Wavering' on Setting Talk Dates

BK0403120095 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 4 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga has said that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] theoretician Anton Balasingham's recent statement that they were ready to drop Eelam [demand for separate homeland] in favor of extensive devolution is the government's biggest victory so far in the march toward peace. She said they (?thought) they would change the LTTE, renowned as one of the most ruthless guerrilla groups in the world. The people in the north are already on the government's side whatever the Tigers say or do. The government has won their hearts and minds. She was addressing provincial councillors, pradesh sabha [provincial council] members, and Sri Lanka Freedom Party parliamentarians yesterday.

The president said the LTTE seems to be wavering on fixing dates for political negotiations while agreeing to the truce and the rehabilitation of the Northern Province. She also charged that the LTTE was trying to win concessions from the government by imposing various conditions without finalizing a date for commencing political talks. President Kumaratunga assured the audience that the government was not weakening the strength and position of the armed forces while talking to the

LTTE in case something goes wrong. There will be no secret deals of any kind with the LTTE, she stressed, describing the cease-fire, now in its second month, as the first major victory in the peace process.

So far the government and the LTTE have exchanged 34 letters but they have still not responded to the offer to begin talks on the political issue. Nevertheless, the government has not been defeated in the attempt for peace. The door is still open for peace. We never believe that the LTTE would change at once simply because we came to power, but if tyrannical Hitler could be defeated, if the PLO and Israel could reconcile, if whites in South Africa could hand over power to President Nelson Mandela, why cannot the LTTE change?

The easing of the restrictions on a range of consumer items sent to the north and the rehabilitation of the province would be a great boon to northern residents. The president reiterated her pledge to take the peace process forward and evolve a solution which safeguards the rights of all communities. Our government has won the confidence of all sections of the people—that is our greatest strength.

Minister Calls For War Preparations

BK0503091895 Hong Kong AFP in English 0748 GMT 5 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, March 5 (AFP)—The threat of war between the Sri Lankan government and the rebel Tamil Tigers increased over the weekend with a ministerial call to prepare to fight as peace talks appeared to be making no progress.

Colombo's negotiating partner, the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), also warned last week that the peace process was in danger unless there was agreement on a permanent ceasefire.

Power and Energy Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte on Saturday [4 March] urged security forces in the eastern Batticaloa district to be ready to fight the LTTE in case the peace process fell by the wayside as similar initiatives have done in the past.

"We will give you whatever you need. We are for a peaceful settlement but be prepared to pursue the military option in the event our peace process breaks down," Ratwatte told troopers while touring military camps in Batticaloa.

Ratwatte, who is also the junior defence minister and a retired army colonel, said he would put on a uniform and join the troops in the event of hostilities breaking out with the LTTE.

Military analysts and Western diplomats say the outbreak of hostilities may already be assured following the launch of the war of words last week.

The LTTE's elusive supremo, Velupillai Prabhakaran, in a strongly-worded letter to President Chandrika Kumaratunga last Tuesday, accused the government of deception and charged it with "giving priority to military subterfuges."

Kumaratunga rejected the allegations and said that Prabhakaran may have decided to mount a verbal assault in a bid to counter growing public opinion against the rebels in their northern Jaffna stronghold.

The current peace drive was launched by Kumaratunga after she came to power in August with the offer of a carrot where a stick had failed to resolve the conflict which has claimed over 30,000 lives since 1972.

The Tigers have been insisting on the implementation of a 40 billion rupee (800 million dollar) rehabilitation package promised by Kumaratunga before venturing into discussions on political issues.

The LTTE which runs a defacto separate state in the northern Jaffna peninsula also wants a permanent cease-fire with security forces instead of the current truce which has held since January 8 despite minor violations.

"Further delays on this question (of a permanent cease-fire) can jeopardise the entire peace process," Prabhakaran warned in his letter to Kumaratunga.

Tamil legislator Dharmalingam Sidhathan said neither side could afford to continue the stalemate and there was a real danger of fighting breaking out.

"It seems the government is also afraid to come out openly with a political package because it could be rejected by the LTTE. What is important is to have something on the table," said Sidhathan who leads a rival Tamil political party.

Kumaratunga blames the Tigers for the delay and claims the LTTE has wavered on the issue of fixing dates to discuss substantive political negotiations.

The LTTE has been leading a guerrilla campiagn for independence for minority Tamils in this majority Sinhalese nation.

On Friday, the President said she would press ahead with her peace drive but at the same time pointed out that the military was kept in readiness "incase something goes wrong."

"We think we can change the LTTE, renowned as one of the most ruthless guerrilla groups in the world," said Kumaratunga. "The people (Tamils) are already on our side, whatever the Tigers say or do.

LTTE Urges Government To Outline Political Package

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[FBIS Transcribed Text] In a fresh statement issued in Jaffna over the weekend, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE, has called upon the government to outline the political package which is being offered to resolve the northeast conflict. The Tigers have also requested President Chandrika Bandaranaike-Kumaratunga to refrain from uttering statements of mistrust and to go ahead with the peace process with determination and commitment. The president must take into consideration the idea of [words indistinct] for a political solution and should not make statements of mistrust while proceeding firmly on the peace mission, the statement which was released (?to the) press by the LTTE in Jaffna stated.

Meanwhile, the president has declared that the LTTE has so far failed to respond positively to the peace package offered by the government. Addressing a large gathering after declaring open the (Kattaturai) model resettlement village in the Northern Province last afternoon, she said that the peace package was aimed at ending the northeast war, which has claimed thousands of lives from both sides.

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